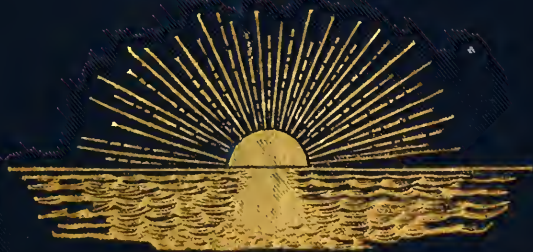


SOLITARY SONG





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. SOLITARY SONG

SOLITARY SONG.

BY
ALLEYNE HARRIS.



LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1891.

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Dedication.

To

MISS ROSE KINGSLEY.

LADY, I gather to thy hand my spoil,
Poor fruit of Love and Fancy, Truth and Toil;
And if the garland hold one blossom true,
It is enough for me to pleasure you.

And when fair thoughts and theories are flown,
There but remains the query, 'Have we sown
As we would reap? Or have we flung abroad
What is but fit for sweeping scythe and sword?'

Ah, who can tell when swords so swiftly deal
Death-blows, and scythes so noiselessly do steal
Across the verdant lawns, then leave to die
The trustful flow'ret that once met the eye!

Lady, the whisp'ring wind may tell a tale
That fans the queenly rose and daisies pale;
If thine the will to trace the hidden song,
Then thine the ear to heed its echo long.

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VICTORIA !

WE sing of Beauty, and we sing of Love,
Shall we not also sing of Honoured Age?
Life's prizes plucked and registered above,
Shall they not be my all-sufficient gage?
And silvered as time-honoured Head and Hair,
'One' Queenly life shines yet, than crowns more fair!

Thy Name ! reverèd Lady of the Land,
Thy Fame ! each sculptured shell on England's
strand

Sings in a loving monotone of Thee ;
While the weird waves that own thee Queen to be
Uplift their voices from dark ages' thrall,
'Victoria,' the best, most loved, of ALL !

GRANNY ON THE JUBILEE.*

WHAT'S that I hear ye say, my girl,
About the Queen so free?
Ye should na' be in such a whirl
'Cause it's her Jubilee.

It's thought for many a thinking heart,
More'n for noise and skirl,
To mind the long and lonely part
Our good Queen's borne, my girl!

Ah! well I mind me o' the day
They crownèd her the Queen;
I stood with my man by the way,
And but the crowd between!

So young she looked and winsome-free,
It seems but yesterday
Sin^t Jim and me in Lunnon see
Her on her Crowning Day!

* As graciously offered to Her Majesty by Her Royal Highness the Princess Christian on behalf of the Author, 1887.

It's all as fine as fine thinks I,
And awfu' grand to see !
But I'm thinking of the weight, says I,
Of that there crown on 'she' !

And glad I was, when all was o'er,
Back here ag'in to come ;
My heart for that young lass were sore—
A Palace ain't like home !

But Jim he laughed and said 'twere fine
To be a Queen like she,
And bet that soon she'd be a goin'
To get a mate like he.

And so she did, a true love match,
I heard 'em say it were ;
That night when Jim's hand raised the latch,
I pray'd for 'Him' and 'Her' !

And then the years went by so quick,
I hardly seem to mind !
I know the childer oft were sick,
But Jim was always kind.

And when we got a paper lent,
He always looked to see
How Queen and Prince's time was spent,
So homelike, happily !

An' oft I felt right glad to think
That dear young lass I see
Had got a luv'in', tender heart
To lean upon, like me.

For we maun all have ups and downs,
And Kings and Queens ain't free ;
Ye'll know they are but human bein's
When ye're as old as me.

But I know well when my Jim died,
When my man went to God,
How long and bitter hard I tried
To bow beneath the rod.

'Tis only each one soul that knows
Her own heart's bitterness,
When a lone woman's comfort goes,
And her life's happiness !

'Twas just as I had roused mysel'
To face the world alone,
When to our Queen the like befell—
The Queen upon her Throne

Was left a widow, too, like me,
And that good Prince was gone !
Ah, then I cried full bitterly—
Afore I was like stone.

My heart just seemed to bleed for her,
I knew what 'twas to 'me';
But she in all her grande-ur,
I knew what it must be!

Since first I see that dear Queen's face,
Upon her crowning day,
I loved to think a smile would chase
Each coming tear away.

A dear good husband, like my Jim,
Was what I longed for her!
Except in course a 'Diadim'
A Queen's goodman must wear.

Ah well! there's Him that bids us trust,
That loves both high and low;
'He giveth His beloved rest';
But oh, they days went slow!

Full slow for her, as well as me,
There kind o' seemed to be
A feeling like o' sympathy
Betwixt that Queen an' me!

Ye need na' smile: I know on her
I'd never set an eye
Sin' Jim and me had looked on her
In them days long gone by.

I heerd the guns a-firing then,
I seed the bonfires blaze ;
And now I'm turned threescore and ten
And Jim has gone his ways.

I would na' stay the mirth an' din
They're making o'er the land ;
I know how long our Queen has bin
A-reigning, good and grand.

I would na' say she is na' proud
To gain her people's love ;
I only think that in the crowd
Her heart must be 'above.'

Ye see, I'm old and ye are young,
And young folk canna' say
How weary seems the road an' long
When him ye loved's away.

And so I think the Queen knows 'best,'
And tho' it's all so gay,
'Her' heart, 'God bless her,' can but rest
With 'her' own Prince this day !

THE SPIRIT-DREAM.

You came to me and took me by the hand,
You showed me the far vista of a Land,
'So' beautiful, in nestling, rosy clouds,
I gazed entranced, from out life's weary crowds ;
Then turned and cried, 'What sweet rest this !' to you ;
You smiled and said, 'Tis "Poesy" you view.'

And then you sighed and grieved o'er many blind ;
You whispered, 'Hand in hand perchance we'd find
The golden clue to that far land of Song ;'
I answered, 'It is late, the way is long ;'
You murmured in my ear a rare refrain,
I viewed the 'Land of Poesy' again.

And ravished by the beauties of that shore,
I prayed to you to lead me on, before
The last sweet glow had faded in the west,
The last songbird had flown home to its nest.
Your eyes were lustrous with the borrowed light,
And answered mine, when o'er us fell the night !

When morning came, that mirage-land was flown,
The once bright skies wore one dull leaden frown,
And you were not ! When from the mists one ray,
One flooding golden Sunbeam lit the way ;
And ere the flush of holy light withdrew,
Within my heart was laid the long-sought clue !

THE RIDE FROM PARIS, 1814.*

WHEN first the Allied forces kept
The Eagle from his thrall,
The Day when death and carnage was
The common theme of all,
The world was thund'ring, cannon roared
The sombre skies were pale ;
Our Isle alone gave forth the sound
Of reaper's scythe or flail :
Pale Russia's millions had drawn breath,
Her fierce foe fled and gone ;
Or frozen 'neath white winter's snows,
Left bare bleached bones alone,
From banks of holy Moskva spread
To Balkan slopes and sea ;
And Europe's flutt'ring pulses stirred
To feel that it was 'free !'

* 'There is one remarkable circumstance will descend as an heirloom in the family. He was the officer entrusted with the important news, to this country, of hostilities having ceased between France and England, in the great Continental War of 1814-20.'—*Illustrated London News*, May, 1860.

For wide the gates 'Montmartre' had flung,
And 'Paris' was the throne,
Not of the would-be Cæsar, but
Of 'Kingly Peace' alone ;
'Twas then the Crownèd Heads therein
Sought one to ride away,
And bear the welcome news to those
Who in our land held sway ;
Those days when no swift current ran,
And, reaching farthest shores,
Could gladden by one kindled word
Both friend and foe by scores !
It was the day of Sword and Steel,
Ere peace and quiet research
Had tamed the nations : War's red page
Left 'Science' in the lurch !
There was a man old Blucher knew,
An Englishman, whose name
Was known to that commander, too,
Who death preferred to shame ;
A heart of iron which beat to be
Where it had ever been :
'To Front' in every danger, as
The first on 'Hazard's' scene !
They chose him out and bid him ride
Upon fleet-footed steed,
To tell how they had crushed and curbed
'King Corsican' indeed ;

To take the joyful news and spread
It wildfire thro' the land—
The sea-girt land that never quailed
Beneath usurper's hand.
He was but honoured to be held
Worthy to cross the sea,
And be the first to carry home
Word of their victory.
What recked the soldier of that day
The cold-death shot or ball?—
When named to run the gauntlet,
Was not 'duty' more than all?
So out he rode beneath the shade
Of stealthy night's dark wing,
And passed the scattered French picquets,
'Tho' shouts and bullets ring.
He scoured the unsown, weed-grown fields,
'The miles of slave-bound sod,
Which, robbed of men killed in harsh wars,
Sent forth its cry to God!
He rode, and when he stayed to change
The foam-flecked steed, and on,
The widow and her children joyed
To hear of 'Blood's Reign' done;
The peasants thronged from out their homes
To speed him on his way,
And watch the rider out of sight,
Then sighed he could not stay

To tell them more, and turned to count
The coins the sergeant flung,
To mutter of their wish to see
‘Cet diable anglais’ hung!
And thence resolving into groups,
They sought the café near,
Where palsied old men spoke of sons,
Now slain, with useless tear!
But onward till the dawning gray
Our English Captain rode,
Nor thought of rest, save for the steed
Whose broad back he bestrode;
And on and on they flew, as swift
As arrow from the bow;
Past ruined chalet, unroofed church,
Whose shading poplars throw
Their skeleton and spiral forms
In hazy lengths below—
Reflections which the sad spring sun
Caught tearfully enow;
Past weary tracts of wasted soil,
With fertile strips between;
Past ‘Ardres’ and ‘Terrouenne,’ until
The ‘arm’ of England seen!
And pausing as he came in sight
Of Calais Straits outspread,
Our soldier half forgot in joy
The weary hours he’d sped!

For there is 'home' beyond those waves,
And he the first to bring
The news of Paris taken, to
His country and his King ;
The older sergeant at his side
Spoke gruffly, with a tear
Half shining in his soft'ning eye,
- ' Hurrah ! the Sea, we're near !'
And then half shamed and half abashed,
He wiped the streaming flanks
Of his good steed and stood erect,
Upright as when in ranks ;
Then on until at length they reached
That once contested Key
Of France, now but a lockless gate
Left open by the sea ;
There they embarked with morning's dawn,
The Captain and his men ;
And gained old Britain's guardian cliffs ,
Upon a good ship, then
The waters bore them safely o'er,
And swelled in secret pride
To bear upon their breast the news
None other bore beside !
Thus ends my tale ; it was a ride
Whose prints, forgotten now,
Have faded from mute mem'ry's page,
As greater deeds must do !

Ah ! those were times when lives were staked,
And lost and won each day ;
Days, too, when brave true-hearted men
Thought nought of life or fray ;
The time when 'neath the angry skies
All Europe's watch-fires blazed,
And English hearts and hands in death
Held fast the Standard raised !
The age of our good grandsires, whom
This age of peace forgets ;
And yet a time tough hearts are fired
To think of with regrets ;
Yet Days of glory, looking back,
Shine with a mellowed ray ;
Some long for days and deeds, to dare,
Long passed by on life's way ;
There need nor gory battles nor
Cruel endless wars without,
To ask where are the old brave hearts,
Once fired at Danger's shout !
Not all go forth to battle-fields,
Where Europe's Powers may rage ;
But there are yet fierce frays and foes
Where all who will engage !
The days once told of come again,
If we know not the name
Of those who as our grandsires fought,
And fearlessly o'ercame.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

ROBIN, Robin Redbreast, Rose upon the snow !
Are you come a-beggin'—for the crumbs, you know ?
Robin, little vagrant, are you watching still ?
There your dinner waits you, on the window-sill.

Robin, Robin Redbreast, well I mind the day,
One short day last winter, I first heard your lay ;
Then you flew down gently, put your head askew,
Looked in impudently, saucy Robin, you !

Robin, Robin Redbreast, there was no one by,
Not a soul to see us, when you came to pry ;
From the snow you blushed, dear—it was *you*, I say—
But you never told, dear, what you saw that day.

Robin, pretty Robin, I will tell you true :
Someone said he loved me ; did you hear him too ?
Why, you saucy Robin, did you look that way ?
Did you see him kiss me, do you mean to say ?

Robin, Robin Redbreast, when next winter comes,
And when you are looking for your dish of crumbs,
Someone else shall feed you—I shall tell them to :
For we shall remember, I, ' my love,' and ' you.'

THE SOUND OF THE SEA.

O MYSTIC, changeful, sounding Sea,
Life's hurried chaos dies in thee,
As with a far yet full refrain
Your surges sweep my heart again.
Unbridled, unrestrainèd, free !
Your waves withhold ' a memory ' ;
Which when half caught, its passion plain
Sinks, as by whispered charm, again.
What lore lies hidden in thy moan,
Thy sea-shell's story all unknown !
A silent sympathy we trace
Beneath thy stormy, smiling face.
Upon thy bosom Vikings rowed
To plough the world. Thou art the road—
Unfathomed yet ; for who can tell
The language of thy troubled spell ?
We dream of thee when far away ;
A ' dream ' thou art, unread this day !
In pride of power, in pictured peace,
Your vision'd problem seeks release !

Oh, take me with thee, Spirit-sea,
And teach thy wondrous dream to me !
Then, fearless as thy frothèd foam,
My soul shall float towards freedom's home.

REMORSE.

ASK me not who I am, why here, my name:
An outcast among men, a thing of shame—
A being whose soul was staked, lost, and sold
In a fell hour, it never dare unfold !

Once was I loved, but *she* has gone away;
Where, do you ask? I dare not, cannot say ;
I only know the sun's light died to me,
And that, where'er she is, she still loves me.

I am alone ! Oh, hideous word—*alone* !
Yet, shadow of the truth, all, *all* is gone ;
A doom that should not come till life is o'er,
Nor till this quiv'ring soul can die no more.

The curse is mine beforehand, heart and mind :
Ever by ling'ring month and year you'll find
I stand *alone*, accursed, as speechless, dumb,
And no sweet voice to break the awesome gloom.

And yet *she* loved me ; and she must love yet :
For tho' her course be o'er, her sun be set,
She lives ! the setting sun will rise again,
And break the thickest midnight sky of pain.

I feel her breath play on my forehead, seared,
I hear her child-like ringing mirth ; 'tis heard
Amid a stifled groan of agony !
Vision avaunt ! I dare not gaze on thee.

And yet I must ! No, holy Powers, it goes !
Ah ! still I seem to view her dying throes :
She died of hunger ! I was mad with drink !
Demons, forsake me ! shall I *ever think* ?

No ; thought is flown ; and yet I see her face—
No longer weary ; not a tear I trace.
Oh, shade seraphic ! welcome back ; your smile
Sheds its sweet blessing o'er Time's roughest mile.

Alone again ! my dark'ning face can speak,
And show it would no mocking pity seek ;
And yet, within my writhing soul's lost pain,
I feel an angel's healing touch again.

You speak to 'me' ! Just so she gently strove,
When here on earth, to speak of Heaven's love—
Of joy ! Ah ! bitter sense of *death* to me :
She who could save me, 'she' has gone from me.

What would you more ? Have I not spurned the one
Whom God once gave me ? Now I am *alone* !
And I must on *alone* ; the silent goal,
The grave, may give peace to my darkened soul.

UNSOUNDED !

WITHIN thy Mind
Lies storèd treasure thou
Mayst, opening, find.

Deep in thine Heart
Seek thy true purpose, 'tis
Of rich gold wrought !

A priceless Pearl,
Too precious for this world,
Thy priceless Soul.

These all are Thine,
And in their wondrous wealth
Hast thou a 'mine' !

With these held *True*,
What reck's if 'Life' and 'Time'
Prove false to *you* !

LINES TO H.R.H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE SILVER WEDDING,
MARCH, 1888.

PRINCESS ! Thou of England's Heart !
As the sweet wild-flowers that start
In thy fair home's wood and dell,
Scarce can e'en Time's footprints tell
Change in thee since first these shores
Thundered with the iron-tongued roars
Of the Nation's welcome given,
And the proud ship, that had striven
With each angry, envious wave,
Safely brought, and gladly gave
Thy rare beauty up to *Him*,
Heir to England's Diadem.

Princess ! Flower of England's Throne,
'Tho' the rough March breath has blown,
Fragrant blossom it has sown,
Light the loving shadows thrown :

Still we gaze with joy and pride
On our Prince's unchanged bride,
While the dear old greeting given
(Registered in heart and heaven),
Rouses from the yielding years
Mem'ries both of smiles and tears !
Yet it brings us too, I trow,
Treasured thought, *our* Princess now !

Princess ! All rejoice with thee,
Gladly keep the memory
Of the day when thy fair face
First among our own found place ;
And the bells that peal would fain
Speak of our true love again !
As it thrills each heart to see
The spring Violet's beauty,
After earth's long winter sleep,
So we fond remembrance keep
Of that time when thou didst come
In thy trustful beauty's bloom !

Princess ! Summer breezes sway
With the breath of stolen day ;
Warmer, sweeter, overflow,
Hold the hearts that virtues know !
Heed not, fear not, Time's rude blast,
English love will live and last.
What tho' years may go their way,
What tho' life itself decay,

When there lives the perfumed breath
Of the love that outlives death !
And the fairest flowers that fade
Star the Spring of Heaven's glade.

THE OLD HOME.

I STOOD spell-bound once more
Beside the dear old home,
And in the summer air
Uprose the evening gloam ;
It shrouded the far hills,
As time had veiled the hours,
- And all the joys and ills
Since youth's long-gathered flowers.

Ah, how my heart was moved
To see them all again !
Again in fancy roved
I with them in the lane ;
Upon the gate I leant :
How sacred seemed the spot
Where now my head was bent
In tears o'er life's frail lot !

Would no pale form arise
To welcome me within ?
And would no kindling eyes
Fulfil my yearning keen ?

From still and silent calm,
From dreamy dead repose,
No faces woke to charm—
No voice to break my woes.

Those cold unheeding walls,
Whose sight brought forth but pain
Seemed ringing with recalls
To life and love in vain !
Alas ! the bright years fled
Are faded, and I mourn ;
For, oh ! those days long sped
Can *never more* return.

THE SPIRIT OF THE STREAM.

WHITHER flowing, rushing Stream, whither art thou
bound ?

'Neath thy silv'ry waters gleam silent depths profound—

As a hazel eye in mirth, radiant in sweet joy,
Child of Nature and of Earth, glancing, gaily coy.

Bounding seething on thy way, singing as you go,
Leaping mossy rock and fall, fretting to and fro ;
Whither flowing, rushing Stream, whither tends thy
way ?

Changefully thy childlike laugh echoes thro' the day.

'Stay awhile,' the branching trees softly murmur
through

Their hushed rows, as gentle breeze lightly stirs each
bough ;

Gravely, wond'ringly they wave thee a staid adieu,
Then their sober faces lave in thy spray anew.

Stay awhile O sylvan stream, but to glance around ;
Magic tho' thy luscious theme, stay before its sound,
Stemmed by winter's silent might, hoarsely dies away ;
Answers yet the naiad bright, ' Wherefore should I
stay ?

' I must hurry on the more while my heart is free ;
I would all my sources pour, fully, as I flee
Past the sunlight's lightsome kiss, past the dreamy
shade,
Flowing on in happiness ere the sun-hours fade !'

Deftly on her way she slipped, gleaming dark her
eye ;
Flashing diamond triumph tripped, fleet as maidens
shy ;
Swiftly, snowy on her train plashed the crystal foam,
Musical her murm'ring strain whispered, ' With me
roam.'

Something in my spirit stirred, with the stream's bright
flow,
Thrilled, as when I watched the bird scale the breezes
brow,
Saddened that it might not soar, cleave the skies with
song,
Yet the streamlet bore away on her breast my wrong.

SONNET,

ON DANTE'S BEATRICE.*

THINE was the gifted Spirit by whose light
One scaled God's Heights Transcendent, Love's soft
 glow,
Wrapped as a Shield the unseared feet we know,
And led past lurid flame and with'ring night
Into the boundless steppes of untrod 'Joy' ;
Where other's unshod feet might *never* stray,
Till by thy Soul's sweet side the Poet's Lay—
Swelled to immortal song no strains destroy ;
While graves gave up their dead and Hell's fierce
 Fear
Was vanquished 'fore the fulness of Love's breath,
The Love inspired by 'Truest Beauty' here
Was strengthened to explore the Realm of Death ;
The Garlands of this earth are worn and sere—
With 'Love-triumphant' Thy white brow we wreath.

* As sent for sixth centenary, Florence, 1890.

‘SOMEBODY’ AND ‘NOBODY.’

WHEN ‘Nobody’ was yet a child
(A babe on whom bright angels smiled),
’Twas ‘Somebody’ was handed round,
His praise in every mouth was found !

When Nobody was grown a youth
(And was a goodly lad, in sooth !),
’Twas Somebody who ruled the roast,
While of his actions all must boast !

When Nobody became a man
(You may deny it, if you can),
’Twas Somebody who made his mark,
Tho’ our poor friend rose with the lark.

When Somebody reclined in down,
(Some called him but a wealthy clown),
Poor Nobody, yet toiling, strove
To earn sufficient for his love !

While Somebody’s touch turned to gold,
His neighbour’s roof was o’er him sold ;
And Nobody, poor luckless scamp !
Found country lanes were sadly damp.

And last of all, I caught a sight
Of Nobody one winter's night :
His face was drawn, his hair was gray ;
There were none by to weep or pray :

While Somebody, so I am told,
Died comfortably when quite old,
And where his grave's rich marbles rise,
Poor Nobody unheeded lies !

TOO LATE.

I LEFT her in my anger—

Ah, my own Love !

To jealousy a stranger—

Ah, my pure Love !

She knew not of dark Passion's thrall ;

She only loved me, that was all—

Ah, my true Love !

I left her, and in sorrow—

Ah, my own Love !

I would return to-morrow—

Ah, for my Love !

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Her heart was broken, and she died ;

In vain the fleeting night-wind cried,

' He will come back whate'er betide,'

And wailed and moaned at her dear side !

Ah, for my Love !

I came back with the gray, gray dawn—

Ah, my dear Love !

The closed flower in the red, red corn

Mourned for my Love.

I came—one moment's lurid flame

Had purged her tender heart from blame—

I bent and wept in lonely shame,

And I yet weep : ' Too late ' I came—

Ah, my dead Love !

‘ST. MARY REDCLIFF’ (BRISTOL).

’MID the old town’s din and clamour,
Near the sullen Avon’s side ;
Where the sunset’s fitful glamour
Stirs the mute and murky tide ;
As a star serene thro’ storm-cloud
Gazing steadfast o’er the sea,
As a pure bride ’neath her veil-shroud,
‘ Mary Redcliff ’ smiles on me.

Graceful, rare, a gracious relic,
To the heart of Bristol known,
Thro’ the mist of years chaotic,
Glowes the graven Gem, there shown ;
Shining out from ages’ denseness,
As a virgin-heart whose praise,
Close enwapt in shrouded tenseness,
Sheds pale splendour o’er dark ways.

Speaking peace from past times’ voices,
Raising mute beseeching eyes,
Whose full soul-lit fire rejoices
(To be quenched awhile in sighs) :

Lovely as a statued vision,
 Breaking on the gloom around,
Blended sweetness and decision
 In its sacred outlines found.

'Neath each spiral slender column,
 And that serried roof of gold,
Breathes close sense of silence solemn,
 Garlanded with 'rest' untold :
Hushed within that fretted portal,
 Hurried feet but seldom stray ;
There the clang and strife of mortal
 Rush and tumult dies away !

Many buildings have we older,
 Few more perfect in design ;
Where dismantled ruins moulder,
 Where restored cathedrals shine :
Thou, upraised upon the altar
 Of thy pedestal of prayer,
Close enlinked, a jewelled psalter,
 Art a memory most rare.

Lying 'neath the far-spread heaven,
 'Mid the moody moment-life,
With thy pointing finger given,
 Beckoning beyond its strife—
Left to stand a silent member
 Of the multitude and throng,
Yet thou call'st them to remember
 Vanished lives may call forth song !

BROUGHT BACK.

You left the room, and, ling'ring at the door,
You spoke of things that we had loved before,
And then the latch was closed ; I never knew,
Not then, that Love and Hope had gone with you.

You left the dark'ning room ; the light went out,
And deeper shadows stole in, 'fear' and 'doubt' ;
And these resolved into a mist of years,
Whose chary sunshine shone through half-shed tears.

And I was weary when you came again,
And could not read your heart ; for life's dull pain
Had eaten to the very core of mine—
A faded blossom Love had ceased to shine !

But when you came the second time to me,
You broke the unsolved years' dark mystery ;
And by the blessèd light, *at last* I knew
That Love, and Trust, and Hope, came back in you.

THE RED TEST.

IN the record of our past,
Shrieking on the winter-blast,
Shudd'ring on hot Summer's wing,
Murder's fearful cry may ring.

Hoarsely in the soul it cries,
With a sound that never dies,
In dread annals of dark crime,
Writ in red tides' sullen slime.

Three-score years and more are gone,
Yet there haunt me, when alone,
Thoughts of him who careless, gay,
Freedom gave, and death his pay !

There are bad in every race—
Will be, while the Day apace
Leaves the Noon for Eve's soft sway :
Deeds of evil mark the way.

Golden good has eagles' wings ;
Evil, snakelike, lurks and stings—
Bat-like flits within the dusk,
Strives to hide within its husk.

Far away across the main
Lie the Western Indies chain
Of fair Islands, long to be
Rich in sweet's fertility.

Foreign lands with ours now deal,
Give base produce for the real ;
Those far Islands' wealth was told
When their pride no longer *sold* !

Tush, what then ! the world must change ;
Scarce discerned, Time's veiled hills range,
Sleeping in the shaded glow,
Lost in cloudland, long ago.

No ; upon horizon pale,
Where the fairest outlines fail,
Springs to life the red-lined brow
Dastard deeds must ever throw.

* * * * *

It is night : in slumber blest,
In the land with dreams close pres't,
Lost in spirit, far away
With his little child at play,

Lies the man whose breath drawn low,
In its gentle 'come and go,'
'Minds one of an infant's rest ;
Yet that room holds 'Death' for guest !

Lithe and stealthy in there creeps
One dark devil-face ! it peeps
Right and left ; the weeping night
Cannot see, to tell the sight !

Softly in the slumber hour,
One black-hearted villain's power
Severs sleep ! The silent soul
Flies to plead the life he stole !

It is morning : not a sound
From that room ; upon the ground
Ne'er a red spot tells a tale ;
Naught but ' Death ' the cheek to pale !

It is morning : prying gleams
Of the fierce sun's glancing beams ;
Break in fevered blaze of light
May not pierce the still dead's sight !

It is morning : voices heard ;
Feet without ; one shrill short word !
Terror reigns that room within ;
Negroes' wild grief swells the din !

(Only *one* in all that grief
Makes his tears and outcries brief—
Glides away ; *he* cannot stay,
View his master by ' the Day !')

And men whisper, 'Yes, he died
(See the razor laid beside!)—
Died, we fear, by his own hand !'
Yet some doubt suspicion fanned.

'No, no, Massa, no kill he,'
Whispers weeping black Sally ;
And with white lips close compest
Someone urges, 'Try the Test !'

Know that Superstition reigned,
And those Isles' dark children stained ;
Deemed the slain man's blood would flow,
If his slayer touched him now !

So they one by one led in
Slaves from out, and slaves from in ;
None were *free* : those were the times
Servitude provoked such crimes.

There were two their master loved ;
There were *two* : with his ungloved,
He had grasped each hand, and said,
'You are free when I am dead.'

Not America's brute crime,
Spread to this far Island's clime—
No ; well treated, oft beloved,
Slaves here worked as it behoved.

But the two of whom I tell,
As the whisper in sea shell,
Heard their Master's words away,
'Thro' the night and thro' the day,

Till the evil, guileful snare
One laid to the other bare ;
And the favour'd valet swore
They'd *be* free, and wait no more !

Let us draw the loathsome veil,
See the man's dark visage pale,
For he, too, must shrinking go,
Touch the hand so lifeless now !

' You must undergo the test,'
Whispers one who'd sought the rest ;
' Follow me '—the ingrate stood
Where the silence *spoke* of ' blood ' !

' No, Sare, no ; I canna go !
My poor Massa luv' him so ;'
Stern the Englishman, and cold,
Answers : ' Do as you are told.'

Real not feignèd sobs broke forth,
As the white man in his wrath
Sternly whispered, ' Touch that hand,
Which so late could *yours* command !'

Shrieking, writhing, the wretch fell
On his knees, he feared the spell ;
Should he touch the man he'd slain,
Forth would flow convicting stain !

Swift to end the awful scene,
The Black, dragged two men between,
In his terror and dismay
Owned he did his master slay.

* * * * *

I have seen the gallows hang
Where those negroes' last cries rang ;
And the rusty chains yet ring—
In the cooling winds they swing.

But a stain was washed away
From our grandsire's memory ;
Nor was he the first who bore
Death, for kind thought shown before !

Fertile still, his lands are ours,
Three-score years have passed as hours ;
'Superstition' we despise
Brought forth '*truth*' to light men's eyes !

But the best light was the Law
Which set free those bound of yore—
The just gift that England gave,
Was his freedom to the Slave.

THE STORY OF A LIFE.

I HEARD the footstep of the passer-by,
I watched the throng, until my own heart's cry
So strong became, the fettered bars unsealed,
My close desire would out ; thus I appealed,
And to the nearest in that hast'ning crowd
I breathed a whispered word, yet half aloud :
' I would go with you, only smile on me,
My heart will give you thanks, for none love me !'
I gathered courage as he mutely passed,
And pleaded to the next that I was cast,
Forlorn and helpless ; that my heart's warm beat
Was his, if he would raise it from his feet.
He answered back, ' I cannot stay ; At home
My love is stored, I too, have far to roam ;
But when I pass again upon this way
Call thou me in, and I may haply stay.'
Another passed, but no, my hope was vain ;
He would scarce listen to my yearning plain,
But, striding on his way with gibe and jeer,
Said, ' Love is transient as the April tear !'

And so with many, till I shamed to show
That I could love my brother here below ;
Tho' many gave fair words, their hearts were cold,
Deadened by bitterness and love of gold ;
And thus my once warm heart grew cold and dead,
As unresponsive as gray skies o'erhead ;
With no one's love in soft'ning joy to shine,
And light my soul, and none to value mine.
Thus went the day whose waking rays had caught
A borrowed radiance, whose sweet light was fraught
With dreams of friendship true, and love, and joys—
Whose early visions oft the world destroys ;
But as I watched the Sun sink down to rest,
From out the shadows came an 'Angel Guest !'
No word He said, but in His eyes I saw
A wondrous light I never knew before ;
And fascinated by that holy gaze,
I drooped my lids before those brilliant rays ;
And trembling with a silent, speechless awe,
I felt my chilled hard heart begin to thaw.
Then was a Hand laid on my shamèd head ;
I sank upon my knees, a clear voice said :
'I came to ask *My* heart ! It is *My own* !
I came to claim the heart whose love had flown.
Thou didst not know that *I* was standing by,
And gave thee not Earth's love, that thine might die
To wake again for Him who craves thy love,
That He may bind it to His own above !
And as that sun, now crims'ning to its rest,

Sinks but to flood a golden morning's crest,
So let thy heart break forth and shine for Me,
And love the more those dead in misery.'
Then lower still I sank at those pierced feet,
The while my kindled heart with fervour beat ;
When out the west the gathered gleam of day
Ceased, and the Angel Form had fled away !

* * * * *

And now I give the Golden Love, not mine,
Freely to all ; and from its living shrine
Is poured on me such sweet refreshing stream,
My heart is golden in the God-like gleam !

THE OLD BOAT.

THE old Boat rests on the gilded beach,
Aflame with the setting sun ;
And the waves are whisp'ring, ' Out our reach
You lie, for your work is done.

' You will ride no more upon our crests,
Nor float on our bosoms free ;
You rest as beneath the drowned man rests,
In caverns below the sea !

' You will never feel our arms upheave,
And raise you above the storm ;
And the crew you bore so safely leave
To rot your now worn-out form.

' Oh, come with us ; we will rise to-night,
When your thankless owners sleep ;
Be free, be free ! ere the day dawn bright,
And afloat upon the deep !'

The old Boat smiled 'neath the sinking sun,
And answered, ' Why fret and fear ?
If the good old days are o'er and done,
I dream of them resting here !

‘ It is well to sail in youth’s glad power,
Face the breakers on the main ;
When old and spent I would stay ashore,
And not turn adrift again.

‘ I lie here and see the ships sail past,
And listen thro’ calm and storm ;
And what do I need ?—my anchor’s cast,
If I rest here safe and warm.

‘ And the skipper comes to smoke his pipe,
And his children’s children play
Upon my bows when the sun is ripe,
And sinks far beneath the Bay !

‘ No ! restless waves, it is peaceful now,
Tho’ I love your well-known song,
To stay in my age and watch your flow,
But I strive not with the strong !’

Loud cried the waves in their rising wrath,
‘ It is cowardice there to stay ;
This night on the fresh breeze from the North
We will bear your hulk away !

‘ The sailors who gather round you now,
And the children whom you love,
Will burn you to make their bright hearths glow,
Ere the white snow rests above !’

And the golden orb of the dying sun.
 Flashed its rose-ray o'er the wave ;
And the old craft said, ' I can feel it done,
 And no higher lot I crave !

' Tho' my heart be burnt to ashes here,
 It is true this day, and warm ;
It is good to glow and man's heart to cheer,
 After drifting on the storm.

' Old friends ! when our work and day is o'er,
 It is best to be patient here ;
And the ruddy blaze that lights the shore
 Bids the weary homeward steer !

THE STRANGER.

HE watched her come,
A rose beneath its dewy shroud ;
Her downcast eye
Veiled as the sun's 'neath summer cloud ;
For who may leave
The sheltered love of childhood's home,
And separate
Unmoved, the past, and new life come !

He watched her as
She knelt beside her choice, that day !
He heard her voice
Again, and then he heard them pray ;
And one wrung heart
Went up with all its weight of woe,
Yet almost joyed
That none its secret pain should know !

Upon his ear,
Lethargic with the rush of years,
Woke thronging sounds
Of speech subdued. ' *She* ' reappears]

Before his sight—
As when she passed between the files
Of faces charged
With sympathetic love and smiles !
He saw again
The lurking tear shine out its cell,
While fond and fast,
Last kisses on her pale cheek fell ;
He felt her gaze
Fall on his 'soul,' and linger there ;
He felt the breeze
That caught and stirred the bride's dark hair !
He heeds no more
The blank of time that pressed between ;
He only sees
The 'centre' of that sylvan scene ;
He only 'feels'
A sleeping pain rouse from its rest,
The probing pain
That ne'er was quenched in life's quest !
Unknown, alone !
Where once the children flung their flowers
And carpeted
The turf with rose and lily showers,
'A *stranger*' stands,
And sees the Bride pass in her bloom !
Then in a maze
Reads that dear name upon a tomb !

PARTED.

THE hand that once gave pledge of friendship true
No more holds out its speaking grasp to you ;
The voice that trembled ere it spoke, ' Good-bye,'
Now calmly says, ' Apart our paths must lie.'

And must I say that you have broken troth ?
Or is there in your heart what frees us both ?
Oh, friend, the bitterness of doubt is gone,
And I can trust you, though bereft and lone.

Altho' aflame at first my heart it glowed,
To think the one who turned aside and showed
The wealth of moments to one wayworn soul,
Should vanish, mute as years passed to their goal.

You *are* my friend, you *must be*, for you said
You *were*, and God Himself, o'erhead,
Witnessed the compact from His throne on high ;
Your heart will answer me, it cannot lie !

Dear friend (such I may call you), past and gone,
The happy hours (when you and I were prone
To speak of friendship and its solace true)
Yet whisper messages of ' peace ' from you.

Should I amid the clang and tumult round,
Of life's long journey, grieve I hear no sound
Of tones that thrill the chord of memory—
Ah, should I yearn, my former friend, for *thee*—

I will but answer my weak heart : Though flown
And drowned those accents in Time's rush and
 moan,
As messengers of God they speak to me,
Not 'lost' ; I know my friend 'in sympathy !'

QUEEN VERA !

CHANGEFUL eyes that dance with light,
Shadows quickly lost to sight,
Loadstone stars that sparkle gay,
Beam pathetic on the way :
'No dark Queen's that I explore,
Yet my Love's for evermore !'

'Vera ' owns those orbs of blue,
Softly touched with twilight hue ;
'Vera ' wields cruel Cupid's sway,
And rejoices o'er her prey !
'No dark Queen that I adore,
Yet my Love for evermore !'

She is laughter, smiles and tears,
April sunlight always clears ;
She's a tale that's all untold,
Cast within the purest mould ;
'No dark Queen that I adore
Yet my Love for evermore !'

Pink-rose clouds and petals share
Brightness with her cheek as fair ;
Vera is my joyous joy,
Love and beauty cannot cloy :
' No dark Queen that I adore,
Yet my Love for evermore !'

Fragile footprints fairy light
Scarce impress the sands in flight ;
Vera's years are four years told,
Kisses fleet that she has sold :
' No dark Queen that I adore,
Yet my Love for evermore !'

Vera's arms that closely cling
Round my throat in coral ring ;
Bind their chain around my heart,
Bid its blossom thickly start :
' No dark Queen that I adore,
Yet my Love for evermore !'

She has taught me words of prayer,
Strange unto the shamefaced air ;
Tales her loving life tells true,
Teach worn hearts to trust anew :
' No dark Queen that I adore,
Yet my Love for evermore !'

Proudly riding on my arm,
Innocence her angel charm ;

Crown and sceptre needs she none,
Rival fears she? no, not one!
‘No dark Queen do I adore;
Vera’s *mine* for evermore!’

TWO WRESTLERS.

UPON the plain within my heart,
Two wrestlers strong are taking part,
And hotly do they both contend ;
I fear the struggle ne'er will end !

For if awhile the one be thrown,
His foe is also oft flung down ;
And, oh ! it seemeth hard to me
To tell the which will victor be.

And yet I love the frailer one,
And when the hot day's fight seems done,
While foemen stand to breathe awhile,
And watch the slowly moving dial ;

Ah ! then my quickened pulses thrill
If but the stronger hath fared ill,
And from my lips an orison
Is blent with psalm for victory won.

Too soon the strain away will die :
Again they strive, and one doth lie
Half-slain and breathless on the field ;
And must my heart to Evil yield ?

Not so ! while Good, my hero, feels
My voiceless prayer, he with me kneels ;
Then rising once again, the foes
In sharp and deadly combat close.

I know on which doth Heaven smile ;
Evil is dark, and full of guile ;
I tremble at his gloomy glance,
So fraught with mem'ries, mute perchance.

But Good, my champion, he is fair,
And wanting not in strength to bear ;
And when a hard-won test is o'er,
How princely noble shines his power !

My heart is wearied in the strife
That never ends except with life ;
But then O Good, thou'lt gain the day,
The victor's song thine own for aye.

FOOTMARKS !

I TRACED your footprints on the golden sand—
 I traced them clear !
I followed o'er the track your beck'ning hand,
 And knew no fear !
And I pursued you in my thought all day,
 You seemed so near.
The sun was sunk beneath the seething bay ;
 I woke in fear,
And heard the whisper of the stealthy tide,
Which murmured as it moaned, and moaning cried,
'We come, we go, but *she* will come no more,
Her footsteps we erase for evermore.
Our feet go on for ever ; others fail,
And vanish as receding ship's white sail.'
I turned ; the sands of Time were wet with tears,
 The night wind blew,
And living thoughts had given place to fears :
 For where were you ?

I could not hear beside the ocean's roar—
The thick spray flew ;
I could not trace the footprints on the shore
To lead to you !
One silver arrow flecked the heavens' night,
O'er turbid chaos gleamed pearled Luna's light,
And calmly, riding in serene repose,
Heedless of all around, above my woes,
A word I traced—a word that spoke of *thee*,
And I had tracked you by that trackless Sea !

THE PICTURED STORY.

THERE'S an old, old painting in a carved gilt frame,
And in the far corner a forgotten name ;
Just a bowl of water and a silv'ry spray
Of fresh dewy roses culled one Summer's day.

The white hand that drew them was long since but
dust,
But red lips once prest those flowers with loving trust ;
And a lover jealous said, ' They shall not die,
But shall live a mem'ry, Love, of you and I.'

And he bent and whispered, ' They shall speak of
thee,
And shall tell who kissed them because *she* loved me.
Life is sweet in springtime, roses fair in June ;
Ah, but sweeter far's the bride to be mine soon !'

And the pictured posy lives and tells the tale,
And yet glows with pride as when the lady, pale
In her sweet emotion, told the flowers she *loved* !
And the one that gave them learnt their secret proved

Oh, the living Rose of one tried heart and pure,
Oh, the loving trust that ever shall endure !
From the simple story that, tho' old, shall last
When the morn of lovers be long o'er and past.

Just a kiss that lingers when the sun is set,
Just a breath of fragrance stirring mem'ry yet,
Just a dawn of joy that ever comes again,
Bathed in smiling dewdrops, tender summer rain.

GO FORTH !

How golden is the sunbeam's pow'r,
How quiv'ring and how frail !
How full and strong Life's little hour,
How high the wild night gale !

How fierce the fray within our hearts
Beneath the noontide glare,
And when the ling'ring eve departs,
What 'Passions,' slain, lie there !

Desire, and Greed, and angry Pride
Are shrieking on the blast,
And what was scorned, or cast aside,
Returns upon the 'Past.'

We cannot see ; a mask is worn,
And spectral are those forms :
Bathed in the smiling, happy dawn,
We know no foes, no storms !

Wait but till hungry darkness falls,
When, beastlike on their prey,
Dark Passions steal in guarded walls,
And lie in wait, to slay !

* * * * *

Go forth by God's light dawning clear,
Go forth and give them chase ;
For Youth is short, and Manhood dear,
And ' Midnight ' nears apace !

‘THERE IS AN ANGEL!’

THERE is an Angel, oh, so white and pure !
Veiled are His eyelids, mute His glance of power ;
But when that Angel turns His gaze on thee,²²
You read the lightning flash ‘Eternity.’

And though life’s echoes hush before His tread,
And Heaven’s terrors play around His head,
Flinch not, but raise the eyes that cannot see,
And learn from Him there is no ‘Death’ for thee !

And He will take within His hand of snow
Your failing heart, and bid its current flow
With such fruition and such speechless bliss !
Told in the rapture of His wakening kiss.

Then in its tender gratitude and praise,
In its sweet freedom from dark, sultry days,
With one full rush your heart will break and flood,
Merge its freed waters in the Sea of God !

THE WINDING RILL.

SWEET triller, singing as you go,
In dulcet tones so soft and low ;
Your silver speech seems rife
With echoes of the ' Psalm of Life ' !

You seek the verdant glade and still
Flow rushing on, oh, restless rill !
And steadfast on your way,
Dare us to join your mystic lay.

And smiling o'er the meadow-sward,
The list'ning flowers a word afford,
Then, dashing in delight,
Pass prattling yet beyond their sight !

You chafe beside the Cotter's home,
Frail lilies ape in fleeting foam ;
Then, breaking forth in glee,
Sing doubly sweet and race on free.

Your ferny neighbours start surprised,
The shrinking harebell drops her eyes,
While on, and ever on,
You hurry till your goal is won.

The grave and scarce-awakened trees,
Now rustling 'neath the shadowed breeze
Their branches bending sigh,
To woo your kiss before you fly !

And on and on you flow and glide,
By fields and woods a silent guide,
Beneath the solemn skies,
Which darken as the daylight dies

Beside the garden wall you pause,
Ere tripping, with sweet mimic roars,
Adown the waiting fall,
And, hastening on, forget it all !

The current of your happy life
Flows gladly thro' vexed maze and strife,
Flies 'fore your heart's deep song,
Oh, blithesome babbler, all day long.

GRANDFATHER'S PROPHECY.

You will work, Lad, you will labour,
In your smiling youth's glad joy,
And no dark thick shade will harbour
Your soul's visions to destroy ;
You will deem that all around you,
E'en the labour, is but play ;
That the buoyant hearts that beat true
In their fealty, beat for aye.

You will work, Lad ; you will gather,
In your early prime of gain,
It may be the World's soft whisper,
Or the harder trial of pain ;
You will listen to the one, Lad,
You will bear the other, too ;
Yet the lesson never solve, Lad,
That each one would teach to you.

You will work, Lad, you will labour,
When the morning fresh has gone,
When the noontide rays beat fiercer,
And your youth's fond trust is flown ;

When the rosy veil is lifted,
And the evening shades loom nigh ;
When the trusting heart has drifted
Where the cold seas kiss the sky !

You must work, Lad, then, the harder,
And your hand will never fail,
And your eye will be the keener,
Tho' you know this poor life frail ;
For the hearts you knew of old, Lad,
And the tried and trusted few,
Wait behind the painted scenes, Lad,
To renew their youth with you !

RONDEAU.

(ON 'WAXWORKS.')

'One vivid blush' betrayed her cheek,
Tho' look was fixed and gesture meek ;
 Decked in brocades and baubles rare,
 Indignant was she at my stare ?
Ah, *neither* scarce dare breathe or speak !

I gazed—it was a pretty freak :
The gems from out her coif's quaint peak
Quivered and trembled out their lair,
 'One vivid blush !'

My fleet view gave what I would seek,
When pale wax flushes tis 'unique' ;
 No figures gay, fantastic, fair,
 I seemed to see ; for one face there
 Had kindling shown from *love*, from *pique* ?
 'One vivid blush !'

FELLOWSHIP.

(FRAGMENT.)

WHEN I, in fellowship with thy sweet Soul,
Read thro' earth's mists our mutual hidden goal
How still is Time, how full of endless Day,
While the gemmed hours fly swiftly *far* away.

When I, alone, am left to dreamy toil,
How harsh and burning one day's trodden soil !
How full of bitterness and wrath the air,
While this poor life cries out in thine to share !

When I am cast to drift adown the stream,
When I am left to hear the sea-mew's scream,
By the sad waves that mystic speak of thee,
Once more I feel our souls in unity !

THROWN ASIDE.

I GATHERED a bunch of flowers,
And took them to where you lay ;
For I thought the breath of flowers
Might chase the dark care away.

You smiled, the tear-drops lying
Unheeded upon your cheek ;
I left the blossoms sighing
A message such lives best speak.

I gathered a bunch of flowers
On that failing autumn day,
And thought no more of the flowers
Which passed, with the tears, away.

Their dewy eyes, upgazing,
Gave rest to a troubled hour,
Their sweet endurance raising
Your slackened spirit's power.

You rose ; the weight of sadness,
As danksome night-dew, had sped ;
Your smile's returning gladness
Scarce heeded the flowers were dead !

They perished, were forgotten,
 Their minist'ring love thrown by ;
Yet, out their dust begotten,
 Arose that which 'cannot die.'

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE.

I DREAMT ! 'Twas of a battle-field :
I heard the clash and clang of war,
The iron-tongued cannon's sullen roar ;
And with a harsh and whirring sound,
The air with bullets teemed around,
Which dealt in slaughter swift and sure.
I saw with wonder, men endure
To let their comrades fall beside,
And scarce to heed them as they died !
But there were some—I see them now—
Chill dews and clammy crowned each brow
And yet these turned, to raise again
The mortal wounded, soothe their pain,
And in the crushing, marring rout,
As 'tendant angels moved about.
That strong brave band, their number few,
And many deeply wounded too—
I watched them ; and the gory field
Seemed glory-lit, though others dealt
Forth muttered curses—oaths and groans
Were mingled with half-muffled moans,

For while men fell and mutely died,
Yet more and more pressed on beside !
The sun sank low beneath the west,
But yet no sign of peace or rest ;
Red 'Carnage' revelled in her prey,
The pale star shuddered on the way ;
I wearied of the turbid scene,
The sickly slaughter dealt between ;
A shadowed voice spoke clear to me,
'This scene is Life, its mystery.'

I dreamt ! 'Twas of the open sea :
Upon the bosom of the deep,
All passion hushed to child-like sleep,
Soft heaved the wave ; my light bark lay,
And rocked upon the surges' sway ;
Beneath some playful, tender strain,
The lulling wavelet crooned refrain.
The air was full of pillowed rest,
While cooling zephyrs added zest,
As floating from th' enamoured wave,
With balmy breathings sweet they lave
The vessel's sides, and am'rous sigh ;
While full before my eager eye,
Cradled upon the white-fringed sea,
An islet whispered 'Home' to me.
Those fairy beauties were haze-veiled,
Although I deemed my light bark sailed

For the dear port I held in view,
And 'there,' I felt it, I was due.
But as my heart spake came a cloud,
And denser mists my Zenith shroud ;
While, with a sound of growing pain,
'The waters rouse them to complain ;
The zephyrs die away in fear,
And flown the amber sunlight clear ;
The dark storm breaks ! my bark is given
To mercy of the winds of heaven ;
The elements rage fiercely round—
I fear their cry where shoals abound !
When silence fell, naught could I see ;
' 'Twas pictured Life,' its mystery.

I dreamt ! I hurried o'er a waste
Of desert sands, impelled by dread ;
I scarce might stay, turn foot or head.
The noontide orb upon my path
His beams outpoured in fiery wrath ;
'The scanty herbage, burnt and bare,
Was arid as the pale plain there.
A parching thirst consumed my tongue ;
To right, to left, in vain I flung
Swift hurried glances, fever-born ;
My sterile path, of verdure shorn,
Gave forth no sound of swelling springs.
But on I flew with terror-wings,

Till glazing eye and failing feet,
Nor warned by sight nor instinct fleet,
No more could guard 'gainst peril share.
I sank at last, scarce conscious, there.
Then low and lucid on my woes
The grateful sound of waters rose ;
I might not reach the silv'ry stream,
Tho' thirsting sight now caught the gleam
Of shining crystal, cooling source ;
My voice was altered—strange and hoarse—
Yet speech I found ; my startled ear
Heard the weak wail in wond'ring fear ;
When blending with the streamlet's strain
A sweeter murmur stilled my pain,
And dimming sight and senses knew
A dewy draught before their view ;
To my dry lip a hand upbore
The healing liquid's thrilling store,
I felt its fragrant moisture meet
The stiffened source of speech, when fleet
And sudden fell the full o'erflow.
I was alone in darkness now,
And knew no thirst ; weird voices rang :
'Life's desert past,' it seemed they sang.

HER WEDDING MORNING.

SWEET Bride, companion of my childish years,
I think of this day's happiness ; yet alien tears,
Uncalled-for, well from out some depth profound,
Whilst you, the cynosure of all around,
Are plighting your tried faith and trust to *him* ;
God grant the love of each may never dim !

Sweet Bride, not in first girlhood's golden dream,
Has your love floated gently, calmly down life's
stream ;
For you have known too well the dark waves' foam.
But 'tis the roughest tide that oft brings home ;
And you are home, dear—home in *all* our hearts,
And sheltered safe in *one*, until death parts.

Sweet Bride, the radiance that surrounds this dawn
Let glow, and shed its fragrant fulness o'er the morn
That bears the pledge of noble constancy
Beside the heart that first did beat for thee ;
But think not, dear one, of earth's love alone,
When kneeling with your choice before 'God's
throne.'

Sweet Bride, remembrance comes of long-past days,
Smiles, tears, and laughter, dark and shining ways ;
And they may come again in turn to thee,
Only ' to-day ' all care and sorrow flee.
And may the shades that veiled the sunlight's power
Fade from thy heart ' for ever ' from this hour !

THE PRAYER OF LIFE.

THE smiling first-fruits of the spring
Are spread abroad, woods, wakening, ring ;
One still small voice goes up to Thee,
One cry ; 'tis, *Nearer*, God, to Thee.

Within the summer's soft repose
The heart gives forth her joys and woes ;
'There yet ascends, O God, to Thee
One prayer ; 'tis, *Nearer*, *nearer Thee*.

The autumn's tribute tear is cast,
The shrouded earth lies hid at last ;
The loamy leaves give forth to Thee
'The prayer of life ; 'tis, *Nearer Thee*.

Upon the winter's pallid breath—
The ice-bound frost of coming death—
One whisper wakes earth's dying day,
'Near to *Thy feet*, our God,' we pray.

ONLY—WHAT ?

ONLY a shiv'ring sigh,
 Only a half-drawn moan ;
Only a faded eye,
 And a hand extended, shown.

Only a heap of rags,
 Only a thin white face ;
A weary step that lags,
 And a helpless, hopeless case.

Gay once with merry smiles,
 Joyous with laughter, too,
Or full of pretty wiles ;
 But with all the life gone now.

Once with a heart that loved,
 In that poor bruised breast ;
Now of all feeling robbed,
 But a craving dull for rest.

Only a message come,
 Only a beggar dead ;
A homeless soul at home,
 And a starving heart full fed.

YESTERDAY.

WHEN you have left me, and gone far away—
Oh, very far away, o'er land and sea—
Then in the silence to your heart may stray
One little sunlit gleam of memory ;
And faded violets of ' thought ' may throw
A fragrance from the past, and there may be
Within your soul a tender, trembling glow—
A dying breath, that stirs sweet memory.

Oh, do not quench the ling'ring incense flung
Among the still fresh flowers of one bright day ;
Oh, do not fling aside the chaplet hung
With blossoms frail—a dream of Yesterday ;
But take it with a soft'ning sweet regret,
And lay it gently on your breast, and say,
' 'Tis dead, long dead, but I can love it yet,
That fragile, loving dream of Yesterday !'

* * * * *

Ah, then, when you are gone far, far away,
And I am left alone and cannot see,
Fear not for me, for I, too, keep the ray,
The radiance of a ' living memory ' !

GRANNY'S GOLDEN WEDDING.

FIFTY years are gone and past,
Fifty years have sped so fast,
Since the day when in youth's bloom,
Ent'ring on your new life's home ;
One the golden symbol placed,
Which has ever since encased,
Not alone that finger frail,
But 'two hearts,' within its pale !
Let those hearts rejoice this day
With their children's children gay !

Fifty years all golden weather ?
Nay, for 'all' life's storms must weather ;
But the smile and tear together,
'Golden gorse and dewy heather,'
Show each other fairer far ;
We should never view the star
If no darkness did enshroud ;
Sunlight shines behind each cloud :
Let united love this day
Shed its sunbeam on your way !

Fifty years now o'er and done ;
But they leave you not alone !
In the maiden's happy face,
In the schoolboy's rough embrace—
Is there not a tribute true,
In the smiles surrounding you ?
Ay, an off'ring worth far more
Than a mine of golden ore :
See, your dear old wedding-ring
Yet a halo round can fling !

Golden weddings, silver too,
Children, what are they to you ?
Golden times for fun and play,
Golden mem'ries live for aye !
And within our souls they sing
With a song that still doth ring
Sweetly thro' all care and din,
Over ' years ' of toil and sin ;
And the purest song I know,
' Children's joy,' shall with you go !

THE TOURNAMENT.

‘OH, bring me my Charger,’ the bold Knight cried ;
‘ I’d ride in the lists this day—

The loveliest face in the country-side
Will smile on the bold Tourney !’

The Heralds have given the signal toned,
The combatants charge midway ;
Ah, neither is down, and the Lady, throned,
Yet watches the angry fray.

The Steeds are wheel’d round, ere again they meet,
The Lady’s rose cheek it pales !
‘ Which Knight is it falls ’neath the charger’s feet,’
She cries, ‘ for my sight it fails !’

‘ Oh, Lady, thy Knight wins the jousts this day,
And rich is the prize I ween !

The gage, is it aught to the Victor, say,
Who wins him his Heart’s fair Queen ?

ON A CHILD.

Ay, hide thy pretty roguish smile,
Sweet child, upon thy mother's breast,
Thy short-lived griefs and artless guile,
To that fond heart alike confest.

'Twas there thine infant head was laid,
Ere yet thy blue eyes knew the light ;
Thy merry antics first were played
In that embrace, there hushed at night.

There, too, thy lisping baby tongue
First framed a sound articulate ;
On thy first word thy mother hung
With love and pride dispassionate.

Ay, turn and gaze with bashful pride ;
Encircled by those tender arms,
Thou'rt safe from ill on every side--
Canst queen it there, with cherub charms !

Thou mindst me of a day, long past,
When I, too, was a little child ;
Ere on the world my lot was cast,
And yet on me a mother smiled !

Ah, flee not yet that resting-place,
And never wound that bosom dear,
Nor aid in bringing to that face
One furrowed line or yearning tear !

— The day will come when powerless proves
That close embrace to shelter thee ;
When thy light bark from harbour roves,
A mother's love thine anchor be !

A HAPPY DAY.

OH, wondrous Clouds ! ye frown in darkening power ;
Say, are ye mourning for the day now o'er ?
Lo, see it die, and weep the last gilt trace
That tells its life is ebbing out apace.

Oh, wondrous Clouds ! bethink you, I would fain
That ye should lift on that past day again ;
When ye, unveiling, flee the fiery dawn,
It may not bring, for me, so fair a morn.

While ye, forgetful, court the coming day,
As fairy sponsors regal in array ;
Then clouds, bright clouds, while ye bring forth in
 bliss,
I shall be mourning short-lived happiness !

ON ROBERT BROWNING.

(DECEMBER 12, 1889.)

LISTEN ! upon the gliding gondola's dark wing
The dark Lagoons of Venice, sighing, sing
A far refrain, ' In our deep heart we hold
Another memory of sweet song told !

Listen ! the breeze scarce stirs the Adriatic's shore,
One voice from Venice shall be heard no more ;
'Tis lost within the wearied city's rest :
The Poet's song is spent, the Poet's quest !

Listen ! the dead past quickens to a murmured sigh :
All greatness falls, the sweetest sound must die ;
And from the soul of Venice speaks a strain
That comes and goes ; 'tis heard in power again !

Not in the broken song of shattered chords,
Not from the soulless lyre of earthly words,
But from the garnered height of mystic lay,
The Poet's dream reads true to him this day.

TWO GEMS.

I HELD a diamond of the purest water,
And kept it shrined within my inmost heart ;
And all were blinded by its wondrous lustre,
All save the one who from the gem did part.

I cherished, too, a pearl of peerless beauty,
Its sheen seemed purer as the jewels lay ;
But tho' it shared the diamond's throne, 'twas duty
That held it there, and not love's stronger stay.

And many envied me the dual treasure,
And would have stol'n the brighter one away ;
For so it was that all took far more pleasure
The Brilliant in, than in its neighbour stray.

There came a day when I was weary, sleeping :
When I awoke the diamond shone alone ;
And all that day I sought my lost pearl weeping—
I knew its value when, alas ! 'twas gone.

And I was conscience-struck when in the Even
My lonely gem would give scarce half its light ;
And when the diamond stars gleamed out from
heaven,
I feared to meet the Jewel-giver's sight.

Too soon she saw her priceless pearl was missing,
Too soon she knew I to my trust was false ;
But tho' she mourned, she murmur'd a last blessing,
And took not back the diamond for my faults.

She bade me keep the stone as mine for ever,
And share it with the one who stole her pearl ;
Thus might both gems in radiance shine, nor sever,
Thus might an angel's holy love unfurl.

And in the gloaming now the pearl is lying
Beside the kindling Diamond's fire in peace ;
Yet in their depth two careworn hearts are trying
To quench another flame that will not cease.

But when they dream of that once noble giver,
Her sweet gem's rays will glance and flash divine ;
And when they ponder on that gift ' for ever,'
A lightning gleam doth through the diamond shine !

And with a flood of light that reaches heaven,
Those hearts are fired a vision sweet to know,
For there, forgetful of her own once riven,
An angel beckons them with jewelled brow !

‘MAIDEN COY!’

MAIDEN, cruel and hard to please,
Give this aching heart some ease :
Say, beneath this outward show,
Lies no lurking love below,
Tell me, pretty maiden ?

Maiden, for an hour have done,
Sad for me this idle fun !
Know thy play is cold to me,
Know I love in verity !
Frown not, pretty maiden !

Maiden, have I not been flung
Empty jests with gibing tongue ?
Yet those rosy lips need give
But a smile, to bid me live ;
Smile then, pretty maiden !

Maiden, coy and hard to please,
Say you only love to tease !
Would you I should leave you *now* ?
Nay, you have a heart, I trow ?
Give it, pretty maiden !

Maiden, well you know and feel—
Hear me ! 'Tis my last appeal ;
Ah, you turn your face away,
Burning blushes bid me stay
 With my pretty maiden !

MUFFLED OARS.

STROKE by stroke the oars are dipping
In the surfy, smiling sea ;
Step by step the moments slipping,
Nearing shores we may not see.

Slow or swift the hourly journey,
Yet life's bark doth gliding run,
Past the banks beflower'd and ferny,
Bathed in dew or morning sun.

Do we feel the minutes creeping ?
Do we count the melting days—
In the noontide, or but sleeping,
Drowsy 'neath the warm sunrays ?

Have we lost our hearts in gazing
On the fairy scene around,
Or are billows dark erasing
From our eyes joy lately found ?

Smooth or rough the oars are plying,
Ploughing through the trackless main ;
Joy and laughter, tears and sighing,
Fleetly pass as sunshine, rain.

And we never stay or linger,
Tho' some deem we stand so still ;
They see not the silent finger
Pointing on for good or ill.

Muffled oars have 'Time's' swift rowers,
To the dazed eye and ear ;
While some watch the cloud that lowers
With a speechless, chilling fear.

Still the stroke divides the waters,
And the beating heart is true ;
For the wings of 'Time's' gray daughters
Speed us on where all are due.

And the shore is drawing nearer,
'Mid the weeping and the song ;
Most but value life the dearer,
As it may not stay for long.

Mystic in the silver moonlight,
Boats unlade their freight as due ;
But the distant sailor's eyesight
May not pierce that far-off view.

Only some are gazing mastward,
And, unblinded by salt spray,
They are steering steadfast onward,
To the light of coming Day.

Stroke by stroke the morning passes,
Step by step the bright hours flee ;
Do we gather fruit or grasses
For thy shores, 'Eternity' ?

‘WHERE ART THOU, FRIEND?’

WHERE art thou, friend, this moody midnight hour?
Sleeping serenely, or in wakeful power
Inditing half-read thoughts that sweep the soul,
As a white hand which trembling harp-chords stole?

Do some unbidden forces speak to thee,
And tinge thy dawning dreams with memory?
Within thy heart, thy mind, comes no far gleam,
No star of night to shed its silver beam—

To lead thee, in this still and silent rest,
Beneath those countless hosts whose vigils blest
Seem rapt in depth of prayer for this dark world;
A diamond daïs 'neath one vast throne unfurled!

Oh, doth thy soul not throb to see beyond,
And pierce the depth of that vast silvered bond
That stretches overhead an unread scroll,
Written in lucid light night's shades unroll?

What is thy thought, thy dream, if thou art gone
To slumber where the dreamer's dream atone?
For night and day dreams may be bright in hue,
But well we know the brightest ne'er come true.

Peace to thee, friend, where'er thy soul may roam—
Peace to thy visions, absent or at home ;
Mayhap our wingèd thoughts may meet and rest
'Neath loving Sleep's soft hand, and there be blest.

LIFE-LINKS.

I TOOK a golden Chainlet,
And round about it cast
The diamond links of mem'ry fleet,
And thought I'd bound it fast ;
But, alas ! the gold contained alloy,
And in the wintry blast
The tension tried the glist'ning bond :
It snapt and broke at last.

I took a silver Cable-cord,
And thought that it was sure
To bind me to the hearts I loved,
It seemed so strong and pure ;
But a noxious vapour rose from earth,
Corroding to the core ;
It sullied every virgin ring,
And broke my chain once more.

I took a sheeny Riband,
Begirt with costly jewel ;
I flung it to the hands held out.
And bound it to my soul :

But the radiant flame of glowing love
Was dimmed by years of toil ;
'The storms of life beat down the band
And rent away the whole !

And then I chose a silken Thread,
Made fast with earnest prayer,
Close-claspt with loving sympathy,
And sent it to them there.
And that single clue awoke their hearts
From sleep of sin and care ;
'The golden coil of Heaven's Love
Has brought our spirits near !

AFTER THE AUTUMN SHOWER.

(LAKE SCENERY.)

WHEN the vale lies in the sunlight,
And the weeping skies have shed
All their tears upon the woods bright,
On the leaf, and flower, and mead ;
When from out th' unveiling tree-top
Springs the rainbow's mystic arch,
And as crystal shines the raindrop
On the graceful fringed Larch ;
When the gleaming Mountain-Ashes
With their scarlet berries shine,
And the newly-filled rill dashes,
Onward, downward, to its shrine ;
When among the green gold bracken
Lights illuminate and glow,
And the watchful trees, unshaken,
Shed their diamonds as you go ;
When the air, in dreamy stillness,
Seems to rest as from a storm,
And the wild-flower breathes fresh sweetness,
And expands its slender form ;

When the dead leaves give their odour,
And the grateful earth its scent,
And the trembling aspens shudder,
With their tear-stained faces bent—
Then the world awakes in beauty,
As did 'Venus' from the sea,
And from out its freshened glory
Smiles a welcome unto me !

‘SLEEPING AND WAKING.’

WE sleep ; and restless in our dreams,
The harassed mind gains no true rest,
And even sleep a picture seems
Of daily toil, of earthly quest !
In each we grasp, with clinging hands,
But shifting phantoms, dream them true ;
And pass ’twixt drear and fertile lands,
Ourselves but shadows gliding through !

We sleep : each dreams his own short tale,
And wakes at last to know it so ;
For whether blank or full, dreams fail
Before the radiant morning glow :
Tho’ some have passed in guileless sleep,
To rouse from childhood’s slumber where
No mock repose sad eyelids steep ;
For all awake for ever *there* !

MINE.

I LOVED you !

Not with most men's love, rugged, strong,
Nor women's, on through right or wrong,
But as you love and know not why,
Yet feel such love can never die,

I loved you !

I loved you !

It may be that your face awoke
Some sleeping chord, released the yoke
Of portals bound. There ope'd *to thee*
My heart : 'twas Love that set it free
To love you !

I loved you !

The deepest shade, the strongest will,
Alike dissolved, and all was still ;
You smiled and lit a ray divine,
You took my heart, now yours is mine !

I *love* you !

WRECKED !

I OFTEN gaze on the crested waves
That ride far out at sea,
And the tossed and broken foam that laves
The white sand tenderly ;
I never dream of the spirit-wraith
That sobs above the storm,
But I feel my sailor lad's true faith
Within my heart is warm !

It may be I watch the angry wave
Beside the frowning dawn,
And know that no human hand can save
The helmless ship forlorn ;
'Mid the thunder of the elements,
And boom of signal gun,
I cannot join in the folk's laments—
Nor ' Danger's ' rocket shun.

When I leave the brooding shore and wend
My lone way up the lane,
Cold despair and fear within me blend,
And surge their deadly pain ;

For the strife I leave beneath the cliff
Wakes in my heart alone,
And I see again my own lad's skiff,
And hear his drowning moan.

The sound of the sea is sweet to me,
Whether it sleeps or strives,
For the murm'ring waves speak soothingly,
'O'er us he rides and drives ;'
And the Ocean lures me to its bed,
My woe I leave at home,
All the bitter tears I there have shed,
Are checked beside the foam.

Ah, folks say, '*She's daft*': they'll have their say ;
But one voice speaks to me—
That whisper lives on the flying spray
That bids the dark care flee ;
So I wander by the trackless main,
And fear no storm for *him* :
I must wait and watch thro' sun and rain,
Altho' my eyes grow dim !

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE.

LEAVE you, after yearly treading
Smooth and thorny paths with you !
Days and nights of patient plodding,
Thro' the dark and cold, we two !
Could you deem me so unloving
As to leave you lonely now ?

Leave you, I who ever cherished
In this heart the thought of you !
Not till that and soul have perished,
Could I ever part from you ;
Not till all my journey finished,
Shall I your dear hand let go !

See the bryony festooning
All the dark'ning hedgerows near ;
See the clematis that's clinging
In its purple mantle there ;
Should you rend them from their holding,
Would they half so sweet appear ?

Pluck the ivy from the fond tree,
Lay the 'Gloire de Dijon' prone,
You would take away all beauty,
Kill the climber, bare its throne ;
And how cold and drear life would be
If you tore 'Love's' tendrils down !

Contrast 'tis that makes things lovely,
Light and shadow give the charm ;
Woman's love shines far more sweetly
Clinging to the man's strong arm ;
And the truest life-tints brightly,
But in failing, kindle warm !

LIVING ROSES.

My love brought me three Roses
From out a garden gay ;
And one was white, and one was red,
And one cream-gold in ray.
My love plucked me those Roses,
Oh, many years ago,
Before the summer posies
Were hid 'neath winter's snow.

My love, that brought me Roses,
Has gone himself away ;
For roses bud, and bloom, and fall,
All in one summer's day !
And yet those fair gift-roses
Gleam out their leaves to me,
For 'neath life's snows bloom posies
That flower eternally !

My love may bring me Roses
From gardens old, yet new—
May bring again sweet Roses
Of varied shade and hue ;

Pure Rose of 'Faith,' deep Rose of 'Love,
And gold-tipped bloom of 'Joy':
These, *these* the living Roses
That neither fade nor cloy.

LOST AND FOUND !

Lost in the golden shroud of Fancy's hue,
Withdrawn as exhaled drop of diamond dew ;
To shine again a gem from out the sky,
One swift but scarce-grasped thought that cannot die.

Borne on the fiery wing of after-glow,
'Touching the list'ning heart's sweet overflow ;
Gleaming undimmed throughout the march of years,
Above the care and trouble, toil and tears !

Found, yet unknown, as dreamt of but in dreams,
Lit full in sight, a glory-light it seems ;
Far, far above its living life will throw
One meteor flash, and then it fades below !

LAME CHARLIE.

‘ YOUR Mother is old and crusty ;
She never before was laid
Aside—I was strong and lusty ;
But never you heed what I’ve said !
You’re the last one, Charlie, left me—
The others are gone their own gait ;
You mustn’t be down upon me,
For ’tis hard to lie here and wait !

‘ But ’tisin’t as hard for me, dear,
As it was all them years for you.
I’m glad that ’tis me that lies he’e,
It ’ad better be me than you ;
Eh, Charlie ! I love to see ye
A-gettin’ about in such style ;
Don’t ye be troublin’ about me,
If Mother is cross for awhile !

Your brothers seldom come near me,
Your sisters are married and gone,
And ’tis when a daughter leaves ye
Her husband and children’s her own ;

Ah, yes, they are all gone from me,
They've their bairnies, and 'tis best ;
But, Charlie, I've got you with me,
You'll stay till I go to my rest !

' Don't shake your head and look sad, dear,
There's no need for to speak o' that now :
I'm thinking that God was good, dear,
Though you never could follow the plough ;
For had you been strong and likely,
And tall and well grown like the rest,
Maybe you'd have not been with me,
And I always have loved you the best.

' Ah, Charlie, you needn't flush so—
Do ye think I don't know the pain—
The pain your heart knows, and must know ?
But now you walk blithely again,
My boy, that was with me always,
My baby long after the rest !
But One understands all the hard ways,
And I always have loved you the best.

' The children that call me Granny,
Little dears, they just come and go
(But, ah ! there are few, if any,
Such children as *you*, long ago) ;
They come and they prattle round me
And show me their bits of things—
Remind me of my little Charlie
Before God had clipt his wings !

- ‘ Ah, dearie, ’twas God that done it,
And often I wondered for why ;
I troubled a mint about it,
And often knelt down for to cry !
Eh ! I never thought to see you
As I see you a-walking now ;
’Twas the London doctor saved you,
Who gave you them crutches, too.
- ‘ Ah, Charlie, my winsome laddie,
How you followed me with your eyes !
When I went to my work and left ye,
How the tears within ’em would rise !
I never forget it, my darlin’ !
Now’s my turn to watch and to wait ;
When the others met me a-playin’,
How I cried by the garden gate !
- ‘ Yes, Charlie, you’ve been my blessin’,
Some blessin’s are born from tears ;
You’ve always been good and willin’,
And you’ve loved me for all these years.
Your brothers are strong and steady,
And Sally and Jane they are kind ;
But ’twas you that looked out for me
When I came home late—d’ye mind ?
- ‘ And now that my boy is older,
And I’m an old woman laid low,
He never forgets his Mother,
Tho’ she scolds him at times, you know !

Yet, Charlie, I've often wondered,
Since I've done with the work and play,
Of that Mother who sat and pondered
On what her dear Son would say !

' You were sent with a message to me—

Yes, I feel it the more and more—
From the One who can love and pity,
(Laid low my poor boy before !)

The years of your patient bearing
Are teaching me still to lie ;
And now you are up and stirring,
I'm ready, when called, to die !

' Your brothers are seldom near me,

Your sisters both married and gone ;
I was always quick-tempered, Charlie,
But you'll not leave your Mother alone ;
You know what it is to suffer—

Some day the old woman must die :
She knows the last son God gave her
Will meet her again up on high !

‘MY DARLING.’

SHE lay—

A statued angel on a sleeping tomb ;

Her dark hair clust’ring round that marbled brow

Her sweet face smiled from out the stricken gloom ;

Her pale locked hands were pleading mutely now.

She lay !

And something not *of earth* seemed watching there,

For even Sorrow froze and fled away

Before the holy calm that lingered near,

That whispered, ‘This is ground to kneel and pray !’

She lay

As in sweet sleep, and smiled upon my prayer ;

A peace I scarce could grasp came o’er my heart !

I heard the angels’ wings stir softly there,

And felt not even death our souls could part.

She lay—

Purer than lenten lilies, drifted snow ;

Outside the world went on, its joy and pain ;

And I am comforted, for *now* I know

That ‘Death’ will give her back to me again !

‘PATCHWORK.’

NEATLY, deftly,

Laid in with stitches clean,
Is the varied drap’ry wrought,
With the bright hues between ;
Patchwork, Patchwork !

Blended the light and shade ;
Ah ! but the world is ‘Patchwork,’
With its old edges frayed !

Harshly, crudely,
Striking upon the eye,
Gleam the Reds and Blues of Life,
But for the soft shades nigh ;
Neatly, deftly,
Lay in the deep rich hue ;
And though the world be ‘Patchwork,’
Yet may it smile for you !

Gladly, sadly,
One by the other laid,
Bit by bit we place them in,
And tho’ the edge be frayed ;

Patchwork, Patchwork !
Bronzes to peacock blue,
'Tell, tho' the world be 'Patchwork,
Yet it may smile for you !

AKIN.

A MINSTREL sang for a Royal Princess,
Both beauty and grace had she ;
And she smiled with a smile of graciousness,
That the singer yearned to see.

But the hungry heart was sore and sad,
The song was all in vain !
For no word of kindness sent him glad
To his darksome home again.

A minstrel craved of a Royal Princess
A boon that the great oft threw,
But she scarce turned in her languidness
To say, ' It is not for you.'

And the suppliant sank into the shade,
His hand to his moody brow,
And longed that he in the dust had laid,
Ere in vain he bent so low.

But the beaming noontide bright bent down
And kissed the poor downcast heart ;
And the pleader looked, the shade was flown—
The shade from his weary heart.

And he said, 'I have asked from both a dole—
A dole a Princess might give ;
But one loving heart is worth the whole
Of the world, and for that I'll live !'

And that night he sang for the Queen of all—
Not of beauty, grace, nor power ;
On a chastened heart the strain did fall,
As rain on the thirsty flower.

And the gentle Lady Royal sent down,
'We have heard thy song's sweet tone !'
For the heart that beat upon a throne,
And the singer's heart, were one.

And the minstrel passed from the Palace Gate
With his heart aglow with 'love' ;
The long-sought-for gift, though it reached him late,
A ray from the Throne above.

EVENSONG.

It is the Vesper Hour of Day,
The flooding West each branching spray
And traceried leaf has tinted bright,
And gilt the copse with burnished light ;
While on the silent air there floats
A warbled song of varied notes
From feathered songsters ; now subdued,
Now raised again, as tho' some feud
Prevailed, and every tiny throat
Joined in sweet babel to promote
The hubbub, (ere all sinks to rest,)
Or trial to prove which chirp the best !
The vale now slumbers in the glow,
And hallowed Peace is Queen below,
No rustle wakens o'er the lea,
The sun, in smiling harmony,
Is sinking 'neath the hilly brow ;
The land is glory-lit, the plough,
Still and unused, a soft shade cast
Upon the golden furrowed past !

In cradled calm, the feathered flock,
Within soft bowers, reposing, rock.
As at command their wings they fold,
Phœbus, in splendour all untold,
Fades with a crimson flush from sight,
And heralds the approaching night.
A cloudy veil o'er all is thrown ;
Then, flooding with her lucid crown,
Majestic rises the pale Moon,
Her starry train around her throne.
It rests the weary, anxious mind,
A balm unspoken still to find
In Nature's ever-soothing breast ;
'Tho' changeful be her mood, 'tis best :
If sad, how full of tender grace !
If gay, 'tis from her radiant face
Man's heart is strengthened for the right,
His spirit, bathed in new-found light,
Is borne beyond these realms to know
A fresh Day dawns, if this must go !

WHAT'S O'CLOCK ?

(PUFF-BALLS.)

ONE o'clock !

Rosy cheeks swoll'n in glee ;

'Two o'clock !

Even 'Time' lingers to see.

'Three o'clock !

Ne'er a snow-second has sped ;

Four o'clock !

Downy still Dandelion's head !

Five o'clock !

Far away, ah ! who can trace

Vanishèd

Seedlets which life's children chase ?

TO A CAPTIVE BIRD.

POOR captive bird, thy song has flown ; the thrill
That woke the echoes of the mountain rill
Is shattered and imprisoned ; 'tis thy pain,
No more to know triumphant song again !

Thou shalt not skim elate the cloud's white breast,
Nor gauge the golden glamour of the west,
Nor circle round the topmost branching tree ;
Such flights of wingèd song are o'er for thee.

Yet sweeter far, oh, fettered, singing soul,
To trace, where loving mem'ries true enroll
The raptured burst of deep ecstatic swell,
The crystal ring of one sweet-voicèd knell !

Ah, captive bird, tho' chill thy lot and cold,
Pour forth thy tone's tried fulness as of old ;
And on the silv'ry burden of thy lay
Thy wing shall mount the yielding heights each day.

The sweetest singer finds the sweetest rest,
But 'tis within 'his song,' not in 'its quest' ;
Far, far above the weighted minor strain,
Thy clarion thrill shall flood the skies again !

TWIN ROSEBUDS.

Two Rosebuds in my heedless hand,
Rivals in scent and hue,
Seemed in their fragrance to demand,
‘Which is the one for you?’

Two Rosebuds, one a creamy white,
Spangled with silv’ry dew ;
The other in the shaded light
Glowed as a gem might do.

Two Maidens, one on either side,
Gave each to me a flower,
Whose beauties I had scarce espied,
But for their od’rous power.

Two Maidens, one with laughing eyes,
Wavelets of gold her hair ;
The other in whose glance their lies
As sweet a smile as rare.

Two rosebud Maidens, fresh and free
As their own flow’rets there ;
The scented Summer’s purity
Showed no more lovely pair.

Two Rosebuds : ah, I took the one—
One that I deemed most fair ;
But in my heart there bloomed alone
One that I might not wear.

The Summer breath of 'long ago '
Speaks in the silence true,
' I fanned the roses' hearts, and know
That was the one for you !'

SONNET.

(ONE CHRISTMAS EVE.)

'Twas Christmas Eve, and wakeful seemed the night,
As hushed, expectant of the Angels' song,
I joined the watch and listened for it long ;
Until a sudden sound of growing might
Broke through the blankness of my chilled sight,
And touched my inmost heart's long silent wrong :
The flood of my dried soul's dark depths and strong
Burst their vain barrier ; the plaintive light
Of pale stars' eyes met mine in sympathy.
When Heaven drew a veil across her face,
Winds wailing rose, woke weirdly, angrily ;
Then sudden silence, sunk the storm's wild chase ;
Deep in my heart was singing tearfully
A summer song, that swelling, sobbed through space.

WHAT ?

A DARK'NING Shade cast on the ground,
A golden sunbeam hov'ring round ;
A strain pathetic, sweet and low,
A tide of bliss scarce dashed with woe ;
'Such Life's varied song may be,
Weeping, shade, or harmony.'

And when its little hist'ry told,
Its warfare o'er, its noontide cold ;
What left to us, what *can* remain,
Nothing save one more broken chain.
Forgotten links which scarce supply
Our needed lesson : How to die.

AT BREAK OF DAY.

At break of Day

A thousand wakening voices ring ;
A thousand hearts gain strength to sing,
And rise on morning's silver wing,

At break of Day.

At close of Day

The childish accents, floating, fly ;
The day is doomed, the day must die,
Yet clust'ring shades but sweep light's eye

At close of Day.

* * * * *

For morning, evening, both are true ;
Both hold their folded bloom for you ;
Both splendour dawn and sober dew
Transmute the herb, whose heart anew
Absorbs the flush and tear-drop too !

There glint forth gold threads not a few

At break of Day,

At close of Day !

RONDEAU.

(ON NOVEMBER.)

CHILL barren month ! the last but one,
Thou art the Year's eleventh son ;
Oh, cold, still wraith, why linger near—
A silent herald, misty fear ?
Dull barrier of the winter sun :

Thy merry Brothers' course is run ;
But after thee ' December's ' fun
And Holy Joy ! Haste, haste from here,
Chill barren month !

Ungential watcher, we would shun
Thy presence ; all Earth's blossom done,
Thy hands, unfilial, spread her bier,
And, churlish, thou hast but *one* tear
(' Chrysanthemum,' white novice nun !),
Chill barren month !

HEARD.

I HEARD the splash of waters,
The ocean's breaking swell ;
I heard the voices in my heart,
From out its depths, as well.

I heard them sing sweet music,
And then discordant die ;
Was it the lapping, surging wave,
Or out my heart, that sigh ?

I know not, yet the murmur
And blent dissonance flew ;
Serenely, calmly slept the tide,
The sportive spray's bright dew.

Yet rang there o'er the billow
A whisper ; and again
A shadow strove within my breast,
Suggestive, as of pain.

I listened 'mid the laughter
That swept so lightly by—
The mirrored smiling, whirling tides,
Beneath the main's heart ply ;

And from the field of waters,
The chasing petrel's fear,
I learnt the echoes of my soul,
Solved by that deep voice near.

HISTORY OF A GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.

(TO E. E. E.)

SHE was a Beauty !

They 'were' all, you know !

She shirked her duty ;

In those days 'twas so !

Her parent would that she should wed his will,

She kicked against it (as they all do still !).

She loved another,

And for *him* she sighed ;

The usual bother —

And papa defied !

Those were the days when parents' will had strength ;

He locked her up, till she gave way, at length !

I cannot picture

How 'twas brought about ;

I will not censure,

But may have a doubt

If the aspirant to her hand held true—

So what, with all her spirit, could she do ?

Well, from her durance,
And her prison fare,
She made a clearance :
Reconciled her *père*,
By bending to his will, as maidens should,
And strove to love the gentleman he would.

And she succeeded—
For 'twas well for her :
The one that pleaded
Was one worthy her.
And ever after, through long married years,
She blessed her father's choice with happy tears !

KEPT.

THERE'S a sacred spot in a far-off land
Where the woodland mosses lie,
And the hills around and near are fanned
By the fir-tree's boding sigh ;
There's a sleeping heart that sweetly dreams,
And yet never wakes to know
The call of the rushing, fretting streams
Which for ever onward flow.

Dream on, my sweetheart, never rouse again,
But slumber in peaceful trust ;
For why should you learn of hidden pain,
Or taste of the desert's dust ?
I see you smile in your sleep, and feel
'Tis best that you slumber there,
Than to know a midnight thief might steal
My heart's guarded treasure rare !

There's a weary heart that throbs and beats,
And listens beside the stream ;
In the winter snows and summer heats
It stays not to sleep or dream ;

For the vision dreamt of long ago
Is o'er for that heart, and done—
Borne far away on the streamlet's flow ;
But the poor tired heart waits on !
And the current echoes past the glen
As the bank ferns kiss the spray,
'Thy dream, it has passed beyond our ken,
As a dream of yesterday !'
But the steadfast flowers still gaze above,
And the bird sings from the tree :
'There's a sweeter song, whose strain is love,
Shall bring thy lost dream to thee !'

AFTER MIDNIGHT (LONDON).

THERE is no sound upon the trodden street,
Wont to re-echo with swift eager feet ;
There is no light from out the dark, still rooms,
Whose windows give back, as the bold moon looms
From dusky cloud, a cold, blank look forlorn,
Like eyes from which the warmth and light is gone.
The city slumbers, and the ceaseless cry,
Clamour and rout, are pillowed, while on high,
Calmly the stars look down in beauty cold ;
The heavens, with dusky arms around, enfold
All in impassive vastness widely spread ;
Faded and gone the once-blue skies o'erhead,
For sable Night has come to mourn and weep,
While Daylight's denizens are wrapt in sleep ;
She gazes darkly down in awful gloom
On silent millions in their silent home.
In sable trappings and in weeds of woe,
The Night enshrouds them in her gloomy throe ;
Like a fell spirit over all she broods,
And frowns upon the fitful Moon, whose moods

Lead her to hide behind Night's wing, and stay
In gulfs obscure, till lost to sight her ray ;
When suddenly emerging from around,
She flashes her soft gaze, and Night, thus found,
And turned to shadow'd Day, shrinks back, away
(As the dark nun who vows to kneel and pray,
In the black darkness, shirks the taper's light,
Deems no sin worse than deadly sin of light) ;
Lost in her shadows thus, the sad Night cowers,
Trembling till lingering Day's first fiery hours
Strike as a ruthless spear her phantom form,
When, shrieking wildly, Night flies on the storm.

COME BACK TO ME !

Come back to me !

Come, for one fleeting moment, that mine eyes
May probe the depths in thine, and read the thought
that lies

In your soul's soul, and ask is there no qualm,
No troubled wave, beneath your bosom's outward
calm ?

Come back to me !

Then will the angry, doubting wound be healed ;
Then will the lips be opened that before were sealed ;
And we could part, not as in discord now,
But with the balm 'forgiveness' on each furrowed
brow !

Come back to me !

The chilling silence echoes back the words ;
The outside life smiles on, as steel-cold swords
Flash in the battle-field, and ne'er a moan
Vibrates upon the air once comrades breathed alone !

Come back to me !

And say you love me—your heart still is mine ;
Then let the birds break forth in song, the warm sun-
shine

Flood the wrapt life of our two hearts' full bliss ;
Only come back, and still my yearning with one kiss !

FULL LIFE.

TAKE the blank page of life's leaflet,
Fill the hungry void with joy ;
One bright gem in heaven's chaplet
Is the one we oft destroy.

Take the folded bud, and place it
Where the gentle shade may fall ;
And when playful sunbeams chase it,
Roses open 'neath their thrall.

Take the pale and angry shadows,
Grasp them in your hand, and know,
Far beneath lie flowery meadows,
Smiling out the depths below.

Take life's graven bowl, and fill it
With the blossoms round you cast,
And their fragrance shall yet give it
Deepened sweetness that will last.

Nerve the trembling hand and listless,
For it may yet gather more ;
And the strength we deem resistless
Is but careless in its power.

Know your heart holds fast within it
Hidden treasure known to *you*,
When alone you sit and spin it—
Wondrous is the web spun true !

Should another seek to share it,
Rise and give an entry free !
None can steal—nay, never fear it :
They can give but more to thee !

THE STREET ROSE-SELLER.

ROSES ! Roses !
Blossoms of every hue ;
Bright in their blushing beauty :
‘ Please, sir, to take a few.’

Roses ! Roses !
Born on a cottage lawn ;
Sweet with the breath of Summer,
Crowned by the dewy dawn !

Roses ! Roses !
Fresh for your buttonhole ;
‘ Fair as the cheek whose flush, sir,
Tells of a heart you stole !’

Roses ! Roses !
Gilt with the sun’s first kiss ;
Paled ‘neath the silver starlight,
Crimsoned with true love’s bliss !

Roses ! Roses ! .
Gay from the garden’s store ;
‘ One that shall brighten eyes, sir,
Watching behind your door.’

Roses ! Roses !
Buy just a bud or two
(' Haven't folks eyes or noses ')
' Lady, they're made for you.'

* * * *

Roses ! Roses !
Things by the crowded way,
Giving their subtle odour
While the soft zephyrs play.

Roses ! Roses !
Fresh from their blooming pride ;
Lost in the sea of faces,
Cast to the rushing tide.

Roses ! Roses !
Fragrant as tried and true ;
Garlanding heavy noontide,
Shrouding night's tears anew !

Roses ! Roses !
Perishing in a sigh ;
Frailest and fullest wither,
Fearlessly fall and die.

Roses ! Roses !
Garnered your loving breath ;
Pitying tears of angels,
Roses that know no death !

VEILED ANGELS.

IF *Sorrow* come !

Bend thy low head before the blast,
And raise it out the dust at last,
More humble, but possessed of power—
Once learnt, ne'er lost, from Sorrow's hour.

IF *Pale Pain* come !

Let not the light within thee die,
For secret strength doth in thee lie ;
Hidden, as shades of night bring forth
Sweet stars of Hope, from out its wrath.

IF *Anguish* come !

And rack thy frame with agony,
Look boldly out thy misery ;
The beats within thy thrice-tried heart
Count, as dense midnight clouds depart.

IF *Cold Death* come !

The fruit of Anguish, Sorrow, Pain,
Alone can aid thee bear *that* strain ;
'Tis then thine enemies of yore
Can bloom forth *friends*, unknown before !

OUR SCOTCH LASSIE.

OF medium height, of daintiness possessed,
All that she is before you stands confessed ;
Perfect in simple dignity ; her face
Sweet in sincerity and changeful grace.

And when she smiles, you feel the warm ray shine
Into your heart, ah ! would that smile were mine ;
But, like the sun in her own land, 'tis rare,
Yet, *when* it breaks, what radiant hopes shine there !

And then she is so gentle and so true,
My heart is *sair* to have her love me too !
For in her comeliness she's so complete,
The very vagrants bless her in the street.

And go you where you will, you cannot find
So douce a lassie, or so choice a mind ;
The breath of evil flies before her gaze,
And as a sunbeam in your heart she stays.

TRANSPLANTED.

THERE bloomed within a garden
A virgin flow'ret rare,
Sweet Love the only warden ;
And all men deemed it fair.

The Seasons passed, and with them
The blossoms fairer grew ;
And some would fain have plucked them
But dared not so to do.

Again the years, set rolling,
Paused in their hast'ning tide ;
This lovely flower consoling
All hearts in its fresh pride,

Until its deep rich wonder
None deemed aught could excel ;
When, lo ! 'twas rent asunder :
By whom no lip could tell.

And those who most had loved it
In its sweet opening day,
Had ne'er a good word for it
When prone and pierced it lay.

And faded grew each leaflet,
Until the brilliant spray,
The rainbow-hued chaplet,
Hung lifeless by the way.

There flew a shining spirit,
And plucked the dying flower ;
Placed on his breast, he bore it
Beyond earth's little hour !

BY THE SEA.

THE tiny wavelets chase and glide
Upon the glist'ning sand ;
The sun bends down to kiss the tide,
And flood the dreaming land.
The white sail-wings grow clear and true,
And flutter ere they flee ;
The song of life sounds nearer—too,
The voices from the sea.

Within the yearning of my dole,
That stirs with closing day ;
Within the spent sea's whispered roll,
The strain of ' Hope ' will stray—
A melody that may not die
From out the western glow,
A song above the salt sea's sigh,
That stills the strife below.

The speaking suntide's living breath
May tinge the unrevealed ;
The looming hand of darkest Death
Is pierced beneath its shield !

I, too, can wait, I shall not quail,
And through the mist I see !
'Tho' phantom shades awhile prevail,
They sink beneath the sea.

* * * *

Ah, who can know ? I dare not say
If my own love is mine for aye ;
I only know that *death* is past,
And I must wait to know at last ;
I loved her so, her heart was mine !
And deathless love may intertwine,
Till, breaking thro' the closèd past,
It rend her spirit's bond at last !
When, kneeling at the Girded Gate,
I hear her whisper, '*Not* too late !'

FOUNDATIONS.

WE are as children delving in the sand ;
We raise our castles on the shelving strand
Of Time, and never note the tide has come
And turned strong-seeming fortress into foam !

We deem our playthings true, and true things play ;
Th' unsparing tide, that no man may delay,
We turn our backs upon, or stem in vain
With idle dreams we dare not trust again.

*

*

*

*

Build, build upon the solid ground ! the shore
Is plaintive with the sound of '*Nevermore* !'
While the deep whisper from the land-breeze free
Thrills with '*For evermore*,' its symphony !

ASLEEP.

GRANNY leans back in her own armchair ;
How silv'ry white is her braided hair !
And her gentle eyes, so sweet and true,
Shine like loving stars upon Rose and you.
(But Granny is tired, the tale she told
Was long for her, for she is so old !)

Yes, dears, once Granny was young and fair ;
A dead rose lies in her Bible there,
But it blooms again beneath her view
When she dreams of youth and girlhood too.
(Ah, Granny remembers early love ;
The dead rose lives in her heart above !)

Granny's asleep in her old armchair ;
She is resting, and she slumbers there
As a little worn-out child might do,
Tho' Granny, you know, is eighty-two.
(Dear me ! how quickly the years go by ;
I scarce can count them, they seem to fly !)

Granny's asleep in her old armchair ;
She lies and she smiles so sweetly there.

What a peaceful look spreads o'er her face,
Which can even the lines of time efface !
(I think I know by that half-drawn sigh
That Granny will wake up by-and-by !)

* * * *

Granny has gone from her old armchair ;
The place she has filled for many a year
Is vacant now, and her tired feet lie
Beneath the sod ; but her soul cannot die !
(Granny is young and beautiful now,
Where the faded roses again will blow.)

INTRICACIES.

It was a moment rich and gracious,
A second, yet a day, alone with you ;
I grasped it not, and joy, audacious,
Passed on and bore it far away with you.

The shadowed cloud, the scudding glamour,
Were breaths upon the vaulted dome of blue ;
The teeming haze, its filmy vapour,
All things as fragile as the moment's hue.

* * * *

I passed the sweetbriar in the hedgerow,
I caught the fragrance from the rose-bowered wall ;
I read the secret 'neath the drift-snow,
Ah ! laden June breath comes again to all !

SATISFIED.

THE Ransomed Spirits paced the shore
Of Paradise, and, gazing down
Afar, the lab'ring earth they saw ;
Each spirit in his glory-crown !

And from the happy heart of each
The tear, a stranger to those eyes,
Welled forth, and fell upon the beach,
While sympathy broke forth in sighs.

'Strange' was that second to the throng,
Yet heart to heart was subtly drawn ;
Th' arrested strain of Heaven's Song
Was tremulously upward borne !

Th' unsealèd sigh's absolvèd plain
Rose where the Sleepless Seraphs stand ;
Swift cleaving through that Starry Train,
The ' Breath of God ' gave forth command :

'Go, tell those Souls the whispered woe,
Thus wafted over Mem'ry's Main,
Stirred the deep " Heart of Heaven " ! Know
" *We* " heard the laden earth complain !'

And gazing far, far out to sea,
Each soul-wrapt eye read sweet and still
The golden answer to its plea,
That 'He who died remembered still.'

FAREWELL TO 'THE SCHWARTZWALD.'

OH, restful forest, fairy hill and dale,
Thy varied hues once more my sight regale ;
Only in visions may I see thee now,
Only in dreams ascend each rocky brow ;
Within thy sweet retreat and vernal shade,
Within each mossy dell and grateful glade,
My spirit hath rejoiced to be thy guest,
And in thy stranger loveliness found rest !
Oh, myriad brooks, and gleaming mountain rills,
Sparkling and rushing, while the sun distils
Thy crystal waters, and the glowing skies
Reflect in thee an azure Paradise,
These now beclouded eyes their last view take,
And straining strive their fond desire to slake,
By drinking in with one long farewell gaze,
Thy glimm'ring beauties in the golden haze.
Oh, murm'ring, fretting stream, and mountain plain
Shall this poor mortal view thee once again ?
Shall e'er again this frail, short-sighted eye
Yet light upon th' embrace it now must fly ?

Or only to the mind's eye reappear
Those rippling falls whose music soothes mine ear?
Alas for me, I fear the hours here won,
As stars must fail 'neath thine own mirror'd Sun!

TRIOLET.

RUBY-red the rose she wore ;

Could it be the one I sent her ?

Wounded was my heart and sore :

Ruby-red the rose she wore,

Doubtless she received a store ;

Well she knows *She* is the centre !

Ruby-red the rose she wore ;

Could it be the one I sent her !

SUMMER AND WINTER.

I CAME from out the thronging care,
Where joy itself was crushed ;
I came across the weary miles
To see a face not wreathed in smiles ;
I came, the withered leaflet hung
Upon the barren tree ;
The melting wraith of white snow clung,
One redbreast in sweet welcome sung ;
And there it was I first saw *thee*,
And it was summer-time for me !

I came again, wild winter gone,
The pale rose wept in dew ;
I came, the sparkling Summer lay
Shrouded in floral tributes gay ;
The em'rald mead's bejewelled lawn
I yet in verdure see ;
I could not trace sweet Summer's morn,
Its burnished beauties all were shorn,
And bitter winter 'twas to me,
For Summer life was hid *with thee* !

BY THE WAYSIDE.

I AM thrown beside life's pathway,
While the heedless, reckless throng
Hurries forward to the highway,
Where the pressure is most strong.

I am thrown beside life's pathway,
But I follow with my eyes
All the crowd upon life's roadway,
Where each passing footprint dies.

And I weary of the chaos
And confusion on the way ;
For all cry ' We cannot stay us ;
We can neither rest nor pray !'

I am thrown beside life's pathway,
And the tears will fill my eyes,
For the bright heart-warming Sun's ray
Seldom shines where my part lies.

And the figures that go past me,
With their heavy tramp and tread,
Often turn to gaze upon me,
But none raise my fallen head !

In the dewy, stilly evening
I can hear their laugh and song ;
But they do not know my yearning,
For they never stay for long.

But my heart goes out unto them,
With a voiceless, wordless cry,
For so many fall among them,
And thus sinking down they die.

And their comrades scarcely heed them,
Scarcely stay to see them fall ;
And the few that pause to mourn them
Must obey the others' call !

There are some have passed beside me
With their faces, oh, so sad !
There were others smiled so sweetly
That it made my own heart glad.

But I ponder on those gone by
I shall never see again,
Till God's Angel in his pity
Gives them 'rest' from this life's pain !

UNFINISHED MUSIC !

(L. W. V.)

A DREAMLIKE interlude—
And then a sylvan stream ;
A cadence deep yet crude—
And then a rift, a gleam !
I heard it all,
Yet not th' expectant strain
That held my soul in thrall.

A loving fantasie—
Lost in a fleeting pain ;
A mystic melody—
A ling'ring chord's refrain,
I knew in part,
Yet not the outlined song
That echoed in my heart.

* * * *

The music of a life—
A running streamlet stray,

That bears where jars are rife
 Its deep and restful lay—
I know 'at last,'
 For far within my soul
The brief strain broke—and past!

SONNET.

(ON DISCONTENT.)

WHAT art thou, creeping as a meshwork round
Our several acts and deeds, a dark'ning veil ;
A shadowed shroud that follows on our trail,
And overhangs each bud of promise found ;
Chasing the sunshine warm upon the ground,
Bidding fair blossoms' bloom to close, or pale
Beneath thy peevish presence, and inhale
Thy noxious exhalations all around ?
Our very joys, extinguished, scarce may spring
To life beneath thy ling'ring sickly blight ;
Thy blemish steals upon us as the night
Sends its first shade, to streak the rosy wing
Of day's last hour ; and when our hearts would sing :
Deep tones of ' Discontent ' their songs affright !

AFTER-CONFIDENCES.

ONE there was I deemed I loved
(My heart, too, was strangely moved !)
Came and whispered, well—to me—
Words ! I was but young, you see !

One there was, ah ! full of guile,
Sweet, unstable as his smile ;
Yes, he gave me paltry pain,
Such love seldom comes again.

One there was, I see him now ;
Life's swift ebb-tide stays its flow
While we pass unmindful by :
Roses forced, the first to die !

One there was, I deemed him proud,
Never pierced that strong soul's shroud !
When that noble heart found rest,
Then, *too late*, I loved him best !

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Prosy is my tale to you,
But you say one loves you too !
Gales blow hot and gales blow cold,
Summer breaths the soonest told !

Is there one (he is not near),
Once you thought you loved him, dear ?
Some strains slacken in a day ;
Do not cast life-chords away !

RONDEAU.

(ON MEMORY!)

‘ O MEMORY !’ from out thy cell
I gather thee, for thou wilt tell
 Sweet varied tale of truth to me ;
 Long lost thy surge of mockery
Within its gaily-painted shell !

Thy hushed, clear voice, when first it fell
On my dull ear, but rang death-knell ;
 I would not wait to learn of thee,
 ‘ O Memory !’

Till, pensive one day, it befell
I heard a voice that I loved well ;
 Which, swelling to a mighty sea,
 Sank to a whispered calm, to flee !
Fresh are the voices from thy dell,
 ‘ O Memory !’

A LESSON IN COLOURS.

PAINT me a scene, and in Sunlight trace
The varied woof of life's early grace ;
Dash it with tints of youth's brightest joy
Age cannot dim, and no cloud destroy.

How shall I picture from Fancy's loom
Love's fair outlines with no background gloom ?
Contrast alone gives a lasting hue ;
The brightest flowers have their shadows too.

Take, then, thy canvas and on it lay
The glory tints of bright morning's ray ;
Bathe the whole earth in the sheeny glow,
Let the dark shades all hide them below.

Nay, e'en the sunbeams are born in cloud ;
The lightning shafts of the morn enshroud
A shadowed depth that must mirrored lie
On the waters' breast, as the deep blue sky.

See, I will trace a sweet day for you :
How fair is the Landscape soft and true ;
But 'tis where the gilding daylight falls,
Shadow must creep 'neath the sheltering walls.

Under the dome of the cloudless sky
Hundreds of dark shades break on the eye,
Blended to show up each brilliant hue :
Sunlight needs shade, and shines brighter thro' !

Note while I wash in the gray tints sad,
Watch how each sunshaft gleams out more glad !
But 'tis the shadow's most dark'ning pall
Brings forth the richest gleam of them all.

From the World's casement gaze out and see,
Its varied beauties bloom out for thee ;
Light without shade is no light at all—
The light must be strengthened ere it fall !

SWEET SEVENTEEN.

EYES thro' whose depth no passion wave e'er swept,
Whose calm serenity is undisturbed ;
Thoughts undisinayed, whose purity's unwept
E'en by God's angels, sweet and unperturbed.

Braids hanging lovely, as the shaded sun
Tinges the cloudland of its waiting bier,
And a warm blush, a rose bloom's short life done,
Dropping soft petals in a summer fear !

Language that speaks with plaintive pain to me,
Rousing crushed sweetness from long-faded flowers ;
Silence that tells two close prest lips may be ;
Heralds awak'ning long, long silent hours !

VILLANELLE,
ARRANGED AS A DUET.
(TO C. E. D.)

WHEN once you have made a name,
Then write whatever trash that you will,
The critics will *never* blame !

Most authors they do the same ;
'The magazines full soon you may fill
When once you have made a name !

You *can* have no other claim ;
'There's not the ghost of a chance until
The critics will never blame !

Meanwhile it may seem but tame ;
But write for yourself the time to kill,
' When once you have made a name !

I'll own it ' does ' seem a shame ;
Sweet from the bitter you may distil,
The critics will never blame ! .

So work when you're in the frame,
For tho' you feel disappointment chill,
 ' When once you have made a name,'
The critics will *never* blame !

PATT'RING FEET.

THE little faces loved are fled,
The patt'ring feet are gone ;
The tears and smiles and laughter shed
On list'ning air are flown !

Oh, voices of the iron-bound past,
Can ye return no more ?
Yes, when the cowl of Eve hath cast
Its shade upon the floor.

I lay them lovingly to sleep,
I hear them lisp their prayer ;
In vain the Angel's scythe may reap,
My flowers, if culled, are there !

I hold them in my arms again,
Their weary eyelids close ;
And gone long night of death and pain,
I lull them to repose.

And in the evening hour I know
They are ' at home ' for me ;
I gaze on Heaven's Starry Brow,
And see them smile to me !

And when my restless heart will fail,
 Beneath its void and care,
I murmur to myself *at home*,
 And pray their baby prayer !

EVENING.

THOUGH all praise the golden morning,
And the rosy daybreak dawn,
Yet give me the sweet adorning
By the fragile ' Evening ' borne.
When between its lengthening shadows
The sun's bated rays pour down,
And upon the flooding meadows
Deep'ning mellow light is thrown ;
When the Day shines all the brighter,
As she knows her end is near,
And the cooling zephyrs whisper,
And the changeful sky is clear ;
When the red-brick cot is glowing
In the warmth of light around,
And the distant train, vibrating,
Seems to wake the list'ning ground ;
When the rooks are homeward cawing,
And all birds are on the wing,
And the cattle softly lowing,
While they're driven slowly in ;

When the children's voices linger,
As they break upon the air,
And the sound of some far singer
Bears its music to the ear ;
When the sunset, glories shedding,
Bid its waves of light o'erfall,
When it bathes the earth with crims'ning,
Or with gold-dust fleckers all ;
When the stars come out in heaven,
And all life is hushed and still,
And from out the silence riven
Pours the nightingale's sweet trill ;
When the vaulted dome is shading
To a deeper sapphire glow,
When all trace of day is fading,
And the half-light steeps us now :
As a holy Saint in dying,
Ere in peace he sinks to rest ;
As an infant sweetly crooning,
Ere it sleeps on mother's breast ;
As a ling'ring strain of rapture,
As a lover's fondest sigh,
Is the Evening in its lustre,
When the birth of ' Night ' is nigh.

GOING TO 'THE DRAWING-ROOM.'

Do you envy me ?

Would you have gold and gems like mine ?
Would you, too, have the diamond shine
From out your tresses, gleaming through
Their sombre night with starlike hue ?
Fond dream ! once gained, such baubles give
No pleasure ; best without them live.

Do you envy me ?

You envy what you know not of.
Think you poor paltry wealth brings *love*—
Love such as lights the humble hearth
In unstained sweetness ? Know its worth :
Pure love and tender, joys untold,
All *wither* 'neath the touch of *gold*.

Do you envy me ?

You know not I was once like you,
Till, childlike, dazzled, for the true
Fresh dewdrop of the morn, I gave
Myself to be sick Splendour's Slave.
Wild flowers beneath the hedgerow there
Taste not the world's cold gilded care.

And you envy *me* !
Your dark eyes gaze and hold my own :
The fire of mine is quenched and flown ;
The spirit of youth's dream no more
Breaks o'er my face as heretofore.
Envy not me ! Strange I should feel
What I have *lost*, you would not steal !

WAVES AND RIPPLES.

I STOOD beside a river deep and wide,
And watched the ripples on its shimm'ring tide ;
They shook and trembled in the sunny hour,
Altho' the golden beams did on them pour.

They shivered, shudd'ring in the glory glow,
As tho' they feared the love that bade them flow ;
While gravely, calmly, in the softer shade,
The silent eddies swift obedience paid.

And then the garish orb withdrew its light,
Like shooting-stars were flown the ripples bright ;
And in the gray and sunless hour was spread
The river, passing mutely, grandly, to its bed.

TRIOLET.

Pshaw, my dear ! I would not cry,
Lovers come, and go to-morrow,
And before the fancy fly ;
Pshaw, my dear ! I would not cry.
Almost ere you cease to sigh,
You may learn true strain of sorrow.
Pshaw, my dear ! I would not cry,
Lovers come, and go to-morrow !

SUNSET BRINGS SUNRISE.

AND do you fear to love, because the love you kept
Sacred within your heart faded at last and slept,
As fades and sleeps the mirrored sun below the main?
Fear not, for with the morn yon sun shall rise again,
Shine truer, stronger far, when weary clouds shall part,
And flood the deep recesses of your tested heart.

* * * * *

But though the sun be bright, the summer day is done,
And is there not a nameless pain when it is gone?
Oh, Love was also bright; its day was all too short;
And tho' its hallowed ling'ring rays be upward caught,
To join the parent source from which their sweet birth
came,

That love could never be upon this earth the same.

* * * * *

'Tis sad to see the gorgeous suntide die away,
But dying Love is lovely as the closing day.
If in its very death a sacrifice is wrung,
As incense from a bruised leaflet it is flung;
Fear not to love, then, for thy love will rise again,
Thy chastened heart love purer for its former pain.

SOUL VOICES.

OH, voices echoed on the mountain !
Oh, spirits borne upon the air !
The swift stream's play, the laughing fountain,
Suggest your unsolved speech is there.

Ye hover o'er the slumb'ring valley,
Ye murmur in the mystic sea,
Ye linger by life's crowded alley,
And blend in half-taught harmony.

Oh, light as down your soul-swept breezes,
That thro' the pensive pine-woods weep
Nor ice nor snow's chill grip e'er freezes
Those tones that sink but never sleep.

Ye ring with tracks of flying footsteps,
Ye surge with shimmers of soft play ;
Your cadence calls from gorge and dark depths
Where precipices part the way.

Ye fall as frail as fearful snowflakes,
Yet full and fast ye whirl around,
Where'er the once unconscious ear wakes
To trace your ceaseless waves of sound.

What are ye? Spirits whose white pinions
Vibrate upon the pillowed air?
Or watching, waiting, crowding, minions
Whose stolen speech it may not bear?

Oh, voices trembling in the zephyr
And quiv'ring on the sunwing's glow,
Is it Earth's ear and heart grows deafer
Ere unread language it may know?

PERFECT LOVE

I.

SUPPOSE this hand should loose its hold,
Grow tired, relaxed, or stricken cold,
Returned no more fond pressure true,
Ah ! tell me, Love, what should I do ?

Suppose the dark breath of a cloud
Should tinge the future with its shroud ;
Suppose you said, ' I've changed to you !'
Oh ! tell me, then what should I do ?

For hearts grow unresponsive now,
And hands oft slacken, fail below ;
The warm caressing clasp we loved
Is gone ere yet its strength be proved.

I do not fear the growing old,
'To share with *you* dark watches told,
If but I felt no *change* would come,
If but I knew 'twas always *home*.

Nor do I fear while you are by ;
Yet thoughts will come : around us lie
The blasted life, forsaken hearth,
Their mute reproaches and their dearth.

Nay, do not interrupt me yet,
We know that *these* as lovers met ;
Forgive, dear, if I fear their doom,
And lose your love in weary gloom !

Suppose I loved you not at all,
I should not fear the night's dark pall ;
I fear lest unseen clouds arise
And blot the future from our eyes.

II.

My Love, if but you love me true,
You need not trace the morrow's hue ;
That golden light will lead you on
As when the brightest noontide shone.

My Love, though seething life around
Wail with a bitter cry, the sound
Will often drown what, too, is near,
The song of Love that knows no fear.

We all must learn, in joy or woe,
To trace the secret of that throe ;
If your own heart grow never cold,
'Tis *there* you have the secret told !

No shade need creep where noontide lays
Her glowing hand, her lambent rays,
Or harmless 'twill be traced, to flee !
So with your fears, if you love me.

I do not doubt it ; ah ! I feel
The warm glow from your bosom steal ;
And, dearest, *could* my heart grow cold ?
This hand was neither bought nor sold.

The mystery of Life is great,
The key is often found too late !
When Love unlocks Love's portals, too,
It need but find us ' Lovers true !'

If separated on the road,
If burdened 'neath Life's heavy load,
If silent 'neath some gnawing pain,
What matters, if sweet ' Love ' yet reign ?

Nay, *we* are weak, but *Love* is strong,
And snatches of its wondrous song
Will bear us over *all* you fear,
Until its one true Home appear.

Then, Love, if one went on before
And lingered watching at the door,
Which would you rather be that night,
When shadows flee 'neath ' Morning's Light ' ?

FATHER DAMIEN !

A SACRED name, a sacred life ! and now
A name no *newer* in the 'after-glow !'
No, not while dazzling heights enshrined on high
Erase the faintest whisper of a sigh ;
' He,' willing, gave life's cherished, silver'd span,
To love and live for stricken brother-man ;
To seek a loathsome death on that far isle
Where moments move as months upon life's dial,
Whose very seas, which sweep the shrinking shore,
Moan in compassion—or, in silenced awe,
Unlade their fearsome freight,—to herd alone,
And live a Death in Life, unclean, alone !
What man among us would go forth to die,
Yet live, among a poisoned Colony—
To seek among the vilest carrion-crew,
To bear 'their' awful doom, and love them too ?
Thanks to the Star that shines from Calvary,
That shone and set, for them, for you, for me,
There are some spirits from whose hearts shine forth,
As hidden gems from East, West, South, and North,
Such deathless gleams that e'en the hard, cold World
Starts, to behold such *Love Divine* unfurled !

RIDDLE ME RIGHT!

WILL you tell me, can you tell me,
What my secret thought this day?
Will you read me, read me rightly,
What I scarcely dare to say?

I will tell you, I will read you,
By your bright'ning eye and smile,
All the tale your heart scarce told you,
For its throb and beat the while!

I can read your fortune glibly,
Never scrutinize your palm,
Turn your bent face flushing gladly;
Yes, I can translate the charm.

Once there was a desert island,
And a sullen, tideless sea
Slept around that sunless cloudland,
For it knew no light, you see.

Winter's iron reign was brooding
Darkly o'er that waveless shore,
And the cold, cold blast seemed moaning
Back *regrets* for evermore;

When there came a golden shimmer,
Pierced the gray skies' leaden hue,
And the gracious jewelled summer
Broke long winter's sleep for *you* !

WHAT IS THE DAY?

WHAT is the day? It is a breath,
A passing shadow lost in death;
Or should it be a fleeting 'cloud,'
That, too, is lost in night's dark shroud.

What is the day? We cannot know
Whether it work for weal or woe;
We only know another comes,
And Hope's bright starlight o'er us looms.

What is the day? Maybe but toil,
Or lost in pleasure's shining coil;
How little reck, when gone the day,
Whether 'twas spent in work or play!

What is the day? It is a light
That shines forever in our sight;
When gorgeous planet fires are gone,
One little day may glitter on!

What is a day? 'Twill live or die,
Tho' brief as ever fleeting sigh;
May like a dead life honoured be,
Or lost in hopeless infamy!

A *day* ! it may give years of pain,
Or freshen hearts as longed-for rain ;
Can steep the soul in ages' bliss,
Or kill a life with Judas kiss !

A day, an hour, a minute's sun,
How swiftly told, ere yet begun !
Yet diamond arrows that have striv'n
May reach beyond the target giv'n.

What is a day ? A little life,
Peaceful or varied, calm or strife,
That leaves upon the evening air
A trace of thrilling fragrance rare !

It may be hidden as the flower
That gives its rarest perfume's power ;
It may be lost within the sea—
The sea of Immortality !

It may be that, a priceless gem,
'Tis set in God's own Diadem,
Which, shining o'er death's sullen wave,
Shall prove a beacon strong to save.

SERENADE.

‘ Bid me live near thine heart !’
And when the dark-robed night is nigh,
Breathe from thy casement one soft sigh,
‘ Lie thou within mine heart !’

‘ Bid me live near thine heart !’
And when the zephyr stirs the bough,
Kisses the red rose bending low,
‘ Bid it caress thine heart !’

‘ Bid me draw near thine heart !’
And as thy bosom rises, falls,
Quivers not e’en a breath that calls
Me to draw near thine heart !

‘ Bid me live *in* thine heart !’
Nay, but my life is there e’en now :
You could not stay love’s fullest flow
Ever within thine heart.

YOUTH AND AGE.

I.

It was a little child who knelt in prayer :
The rosebuds tapped upon the diamond pane ;
The fiery sun, retreating to its lair,
Sank 'neath the hedgerow in the silent lane,
While one belated bee's soft drowsy hum
Touched the wrapt silence which around was flung
And scarcely broke it in the silent room,
Around whose walls the shifting sunset clung.
Was it an Angel bright was bending low,
Or one last arrow-beam of light that came
And laid its golden kiss on the bent brow,
Then flooded the light form in rosy flame ?
Whiche'er it was, the child lies down to rest,
The flushed face prest upon the pillow's snow
In peace and innocence, a cherub guest,
Unsullied in the angels' charge below.

II.

It was a fair-haired youth who turned to gaze
Upon the wand'ring creeper o'er the door ;
He lingered, and his bright eyes then did raise,
Beclouded with a tear not there before !
The cottage stood, within no sound of life—
A thing that seemed to frown in empty pain ;
Without, the mingled weeds and flowers were rife,
Th' unheeded climber veiled each window-pane.
'Twas not the same sweet home that he had known,
But, as the bird regards the riven nest,
His eye was chained there, though his heart was stone
Until it fell upon the churchyard's rest !
A rush of feeling came : it was too late
To stem the torrent which relief yet brought ;
And leaning on the old and moss-grown gate,
He gave his weighted heart the dues she sought.

III.

Inflexible in beauty nature bloomed,
And spoke of summer plenty far and wide ;
While 'midst fertility around, entombed,
Lay those who, too, had lived, and loved, and died !
The boy looked up, his loved ones were not *there*,
Yet loth to leave the spot where he could trace
Something yet left of them that he might share,
Something of 'Peace,' that lingered in that place :
The cold gray Tower frowns down in gravity,
The zephyrs sweep the long grass like a sea ;

The cloud-flecked sky spreads drifted purity.
He murmurs : ' Let their blessing rest on me !'
Is it an Angel-form that hovers there,
Or one bright sunbeam, that alone can throw
A winged caress upon the orphan's prayer ?
The air is all one golden overflow :
Beneath the shade that bathes the tombstone's head
The shifting sunlight glances in its play ;
The young bowed head is raised, for time has sped :
He turns to start upon life's opening way.

IV.

Who is this comes, so wond'ringly doth gaze
Upon the gloomy level of the street,
Lost in amused amazement at the ways,
The bustle of the busy city's heat ?
Is it the youth ? Around all *lives* again ;
His boyish hopes are stirred, his heart beats high.
Before is untried ground and heights to gain ;
The dark clouds of the morning quickly fly.
He views the grimy houses and the throng ;
But all is new and strange to him to see,
And hope and faith are strong within the young,
Whose minds are gladly weaned from misery.
Onward he speeds amid the cleaving crowd,
The circling city's arms take one more in ;
Leaving no leisure for the lad to brood,
O'er Sorrow's voice, that wakes his heart within.

V.

Long years are told and finished, and the boy
Has in them toiled as in the dusky mine ;
And his reward is gold, but, ah ! youth's joy
Has fled before the lined forehead's sign,
And where the peaceful churchyard turf enwrapt,
And folded softly o'er, his parents' grave,
Each daisy-spangled mound is proudly capped
With marble monument and lengthy stave.
Now many envy him, and speak him fair,
Who would have scorned the orphan boy to note.
And see, for in this room the *man* stands there,
A man who all say rowed in Fortune's boat ;
Can you yet view the suppliant child-face,
Or in that careworn one before you see
A ling'ring touch of the once boy's fresh grace,
Who in his grief yet looked up hopefully ?
Ah ! vain is wealth, when he who wins it dies
Beneath the weight and over-care it brings,
And the light heart's contented spirit flies
Where gilded sound of golden gain yet rings ;
How hardly shall he turn again to hear
The sweeter cadences in life around ;
Whose spirit, weighted by a burden'd fear,
Grows unresponsive to all music round ;
The childish innocence, the early trust,
Is counted, told, and laid apart, or fled ?
The prime of youth and manhood, low in dust
Is left ; it leaves a wealthy man, instead !

VI.

Again years pass, and bear upon their wing
Away like shrill March winds the dust of wealth ;
Or sadden with their moan or cold death-sting,
And steal, or give sweet joy, as if by stealth !
It is an attic-room where I would climb,
Within a city slum I lead you now ;
For there in helpless case with palsied limb
Lies an old man, poor and uncared-for now !
Riches have taken flight, and want, neglect,
Have paled the cheek and sunk the wayworn frame.
' Little,' he murmurs, ' now can I expect
But death, to end the ruined beggar's shame !'
And the worn rigid face, relaxing, throws
An eager glance around the chamber drear ;
And then the aged, trembling head it bows,
To hide from the cold walls the old man's tear ;
When, lo ! the door is opened, and there comes
A sylph-like form into the silence there ;
A radiance o'er the wasted face there looms,
He gazes on a Seraph childling fair.
The rosy lips part, smiling, as they say,
' I am yourself, as once you used to be,
The child that in the cottage knelt to pray,
Whose spirit has returned, and set yours free.'
And the old man gazed on and on, until
The vision flooded his fast-glazing eye ;
And then he softly smiled, and lay so still,
For as *a child* he feared no more to die.

Hush, wake him not ! the dream of wealth is o'er,
The happy sleep of childhood steeps his brow,
The tides of life are ebbing yet once more,
A child's forgotten prayer breathes '*peace*' below.

THE SETTLER'S SONG.


WHEN the weary night-watches are ended and flown,
And the callous world wakes, and I find me alone,
It is sweet to remember one heart beats for me,
That awakens and listens far o'er the broad sea.

When there's never a hand stretched to clasp in my
 own,
And no kindly word-echoes respond to my tone,
It is then my tried spirit finds strength'ning and rest,
In the thought of the bright smile that I love the
 best.

When I pause in the stillness, and listen around,
And the bird and the grasshopper's lay seems new-
 found,
There's another voice mingles and wakes my heart's
 song,
As it whispers so softly, ' Don't stay away long !'

And I gaze on the field-flower that ope's to the sun,
With its deep steadfast eye, which no rough breeze
 will shun,
And I think of a clear blue eye looking for me,
While a sweet dewdrop lurks in its corner, maybe !

And my labour is lightened, the day sooner o'er,
My weary mood brightened, my heart to the fore,
When I muse on the treasure that's hidden for me
In the dear mother-country far o'er the broad sea !



THE DAWN.

I WOKE in the early morning ;
The sun first broke in light
Thro' the shroud of heaven's awning,
And flashed upon the sight.

There was silence in the meadow,
O'er the expectant grove ;
For the passing hour of Shadow
Yet held her reign above.

In a pure dream all unbroken
The prostrate earth slept there,
While the molten glory-token
Enshrined the eastern air.

And the pulse of earth seemed beating
At breaking day's first birth—
As fond lovers dream a meeting,
Or children dream of mirth.

As the first primeval dawning,
In thrilling beauty drest,
Is the peace of early morning,
In virgin sweets confest.

And a joy caress'd my spirit—
A calm I could not trace
Came o'er my being—inspired it
With touch of Heaven's grace.

And I gauged the roseate garden
Of bloom unveiling sky ;
As the angry clouds' last Warden
Kept watch with jealous eye.

I gazed on the dewy morning,
The fresh, sweet, summer skies,
Till the diamond drops, adorning,
Were gems in the sunrise.

And I felt a nameless Dawning,
Which cannot pass away
Till the Light of Endless Morning
Chases the clouds for aye.

‘ REPARATION.’

I THOUGHT of you,
In your calm haven far away,
Where no disturbing breeze may stray ;
A boundless ocean
Strives again anew—
The sea of Separation
’Tis divides us two !

I thought of you ;
And tho’ I hear no more your voice,
The very *thought* bid me rejoice ;
For there is union
Yet before us two,
And there is ‘ reparation ’
When I think of you !

WHEN YOU AND I.

(LAKE SCENERY.)

WHEN you and I together roved,
Gazed on the Hills and Moors you loved,
They seemed to smile upon me, too,
And e'en the mountain's rugged brow,
Beguiled by the laughing sun,
Shone as a veteran who has done
With grim day's strife, and soft'ning stood,
A Watchman o'er the vale and wood,
Or like the Mastiff quietly lay,
And let the little sunbeams play
Athwart his breast, so rough and broad,
Until the skies in anger thawed,
And, jealous of earth's varied charms,
Let loose the dark cloud from their arms :
But vainly soon the teardrop wept
Yet once again the valleys slept,
In freshened beauties naught could mar,
Again the sunbeams played afar,

While Phœbus bent once more to kiss
Earth's sweet face rapt in happiness ;
When you and I together roved,
And gazed upon the scenes you loved

— THE GREAT SOLEMN ASSEMBLY !*

WHAT as a wave has swept the mighty throng?
What the swift current, fleet, and full, and strong,
Sways the vast multitude and bends them there,
Prostrate in supplication—one great prayer?

What is the hand, the touch, on these bowed heads?
What unknown presence that above outspreads?
What the magnetic influence whose thrill
Can every heart and every bosom fill—

Till e'en the mockers, some would gibe there are,
Swell the one wail, stretch pleading hands afar,
Carried their souls on tears and sobs away?
Ah! all may learn: this is in truth 'to pray!'

* On Tuesday, July 15th, 1890, the Salvation Army held an immense gathering in the 'Crystal Palace' to celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary. The Great 'Solemn Assembly,' held in the Central Transept, was the great feature: between 6,000 and 7,000 soldiers formed the audience. Hymn after hymn ascends. Women crouch in attitudes of supplication, sobbing, etc. Strong men grovel on all fours, rock to and fro in agonies of remorse. 'Let everybody go down! Not a soul must move!' And the immense quivering body of contrite beings sinks before the command—a spectacle! Few witness the sight; those who do are not likely to forget it as long as they live: it is indescribable!—*Daily Telegraph.*

Tho' darkest surge—tho' swift reaction turn
Back the full flow—quench holy fires that burn,
Shall that great flood, that spasm, end in foam?
Nay, for the whisper, 'Truth,' must pierce its home.

'Tis not earth's voice can bend these abject forms ;
It is a whisper heard above life's storms.
Far, far beneath ungainly speech, crude sigh,
Thrills to each soul o'er winds and waves, ' 'Tis I !'

Where the new song vibrates those pearly walls,
Where the grand throng, all blood-bought kin, low
falls,
Who dares to say no deep swell-strain shall be
Gathered from these, 'worthy, O Lamb,' through
Thee ?

ABIDING !

THE pale old gold of primrose bloom
All tapestried the wood ;
The year had waived cold winter's doom
And sent what flowers she could ;
The violet in modest pride
Thrust out her head the while,
But, sinking back, she merely sighed
Beneath the Sun's warm smile !

We strayed into the copse, and roved
Among the dell's fresh green ;
We wandered thro' its depths, and proved
Their virgin sweets between !
And hand in hand we gathered bloom
Of Spring's fair off'rings thrown
About our feet, till we did come
On one to both scarce known !

With in the thickest underwood,
The opening fronds and leaves,
A Flower untouched by winter stood :
Who gathers it achieves

A fairer than the floral chain
Of *all* young Springtime's wealth :
For it will bloom and bloom again,
That Flower I plucked by stealth,

And you—you gave the rosy joy,
And placed it on my breast !
Nor after-seasons could destroy,
Nor after-storms distress't.
The pink anemone's frail flush,
The cowslips amber-dyed,
Have past, but in our hearts' deep hush
Love's beauteous Flowers abide !

IT WAS EVENTIME.

It was Eventime ! The sun was shining
In its glory on the hilly Brow.

It was Eventime ; and you were standing
On the flooded purple moor, you know.

It was Eventime ; and you were whisp'ring
Golden words of life to me !

And the boundless light and love were trembling
In that sunset hour you spoke to me.

It *is* Eventime ; and I am standing
On the same bleak moor ; but where are you ?
It is Eventime ! The sun is sinking,
And my heart is crying out for you !

ONE MISTAKE.

I COULD not read your mind,
My heart was full ;
And all I had designed
Seemed fanciful.

I could not read your heart,
And mine was sad ;
I could not speak my thought
When you were glad !

I could not tell you all,
My lips were dumb ;
I felt cold silence fall,
My heart's beat numb.

A spectre glided in
Between two souls,
And lives I deemed akin
Showed distant goals.

I could not read your heart ;
I never knew
That close-hid tears would start
When I left you !

It was the will of God,
For you, for me ;
My heart beneath Time's sod
Keeps true to thee.

DREAM RAYS.

WHEN suntide streams into the sleeping heart,
And golden Hope lies flushed with amber glow,
When trembling Happiness' warm pulses start,
Oh, where is life's late frowning, haggard brow ?

When wat'ry clouds enshroud the weary West,
And opal fears lie shimm'ring thro' the glow,
Comes calm 'Content,' a scarcely welcomed guest,
After the full sweet flood-tide taste we know.

When Winter's frost has nipt the last green blade,
And ice and snow have ta'en the place of love,
When more than lost the summer's fleckered shade,
But one dull dome outstretched abroad, above ;

Then let them take thy hand and lead thee in
The place beside the ruddy fire for thee,
With folded fancies feed cold contrast's din,
And doze and dream of days that yet may be !

LAID BY !

LAID by among old tomes and moth and rust,
I came upon 'a Story' laid in dust.
And the soft gladness of a past Spring day
Came back with that old letter laid away.

Laid by, the faded record lived again,
And choral songsters swelled a slumb'ring strain ;
Between the scanty fields, the cold highway,
I only saw life's letter, laid away !

Upon the shelf the barred and blurrèd lines
Smiled back, and in the little distance shines
The flicker of the welcome lights that play
Around that one old letter, laid away.

I closed the loving record whose full flow'rs
Could more than sweep with fragrance faded hours,
But in my heart, my soul, unsealed 'twill stay,
That dear unfaded letter, laid away !

SONNET.

(ON SLEEP.)

• O SILENT SLEEP, thy soundless snowflake pall
Hovers arrested on the longing air ;
O pitying Sleep, mine eyelids fain would share,
In thy soft dews, thy melting tears let fall,
Unconsciousness that quenches Unrest's gall ;
Come silv'ry Sleep, thou white-winged guest most fair,
Thou, too, the stilly challenger of Care,
Whose leaden eyes are jealous of thy thrall,
Lest thy benign and dreamy tenderness
Flood with its peace reflected regal calm,
And in the borrowed vision Happiness
Absolve the churlish ruler with its psalm,
To flood these fevered pulses with blest balm,
The loving kiss of sweet Forgetfulness !

THE GOOD-BYE.

TAKE my hand in yours, and press it ;
Let me feel that you are near ;
For I shall not see you, darling,
Till the morning-star appear ! .

Put your loving arm around me,
It has sheltered me so long ;
Whisper, dear, of how you loved me,
For the weary night is long !

Ah, your soft touch thrills my heart's core,
And the voice I love to hear
I shall hear again, and love more
When the dark night disappear !

This dear hand I hold within mine
Speaks of life's long troubled way,
And the lips now trembling for me
Gave sweet comfort day by day ;

Never faltered in the pressure,
Always gave their love and cheer ;
I shall hear their words speak to me
When the morning-star appear !

I shall feel them in the glow, dear,
 Tho' the glory round may daze ;
God, the God who gave you to me,
 Will not separate our ways.

TRY AGAIN.

AND who shall say,
To fail was not to win ?
The fiercest fray
Call-bugle to begin.

He failed ! How failed ?
To others' sight, you mean ;
The cheek that paled
Is ever plainly seen.

Some would confess—
Success knows hope nor fear.
And is ' success '
Only with ' failure ' near !

No, never ' failed ' !
Best learning how to strive,
Till, when assailed,
'Tis proved he learnt ' to live.'

Another bears
Contested prize away,
And Chagrin's tears
Turn crystals in the fray !

The 'Well done,' said,
Is from the servile world—
Once favour's shed,
Too soon its 'stone' is hurled.

While he that lost,
If seen no more again,
Gains far the most—
Has yet 'the world' to gain!

One shallow blast
From fickle, faithless Fame
Builds not to *last*!
The fabric of 'a name.'

THE QUEEN OF NIGHT.

SHE rose !

And cleft the shaded, shrinking soul of night,
Her brow encircled with the pale star's light.

She rose !

And swept the sleeping, shrouded realm that lay
Low at her feet, while summer lightnings play.

She rose !

Her peerless eye no pensive cloud o'ercast,
And as a vision heav'nward, homeward, past.

She rose !

And at her touch the starry diamonds fell,
And sank within the vast sea's stricken dell.

She rose !

Deep was the hush, until the 'Queen of Night,'
Majestic, mounted to her thronèd height.

She rose !

Her coronation robe of velvets, seen,
Enwrought and gorgeous with the latent sheen !

She rose !

One flash of pallid fire—a peace serene,
Told me that Night had crowned her queenly Queen.

MUSIC !

THE sweetest sound was ever toll'd
Where angels tune their harps of gold.
It breaks upon th' enchanted ear,
And wakes fond echoes everywhere.

It thrills upon the hov'ring soul,
And tells it of th' immortal goal,
Then bids it rise and wing its flight
Undaunted, out the gathering night.

It speaks of comfort yet to come,
And dashes 'gainst the walls of gloom ;
It soothes the anxious, wearied one,
And bears fresh hope on silv'ry tone.

It rolls in flood of mystic spell,
And speaks a language all can tell ;
And subtle joys that never fade
Re-bud and bloom where it invade.

And when the stricken, aching heart,
Can to no being its griefs impart,
'Tis music often gives its balm,
And rouses, like some Eastern charm ;

'Twill move again the grateful tear.
The icy heart, so closed and sere,
Runs o'er with happiness new-found,
And lives again in the sweet sound !

It fills with flooded life anew,
And falling light as morning dew,
It surges o'er the mem'ries won,
And sparkles back the bright hours done.

Its far refrain is caught below,
Its wondrous drift seems nearer now !
When fleeting as the rainbow's hue
Its voice has fled—'tis Heaven due !

WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead, oh, do not let me lie
Among the graveyards of the city by.
I could not bear to swell the silent throng
Which lie forgotten where no birds' sweet song
Shall sing a requiem their dust unto—
A desert on the brink of 'human woe.'

When I am dead, oh, let me lie alone
Where fevered life and passions' strife is done ;
In some far spot where I may sleep and be
Lulled to my rest by sweet obscurity.
No sculptured marbles raise o'er my low head ;
There let there rise the wild-flowers' breath instead.

When I am dead, Life's spirit fled with me,
Yet would I love to leave this clay near thee,
Yet would I ask it might repose and rest
In solitudes I ever loved the best ;
Where, when the lightning of God's waking come,
My dust shall rise unfettered to His Home.

ON MODERN POETRY.

FEW hands now tremble o'er thy golden lyre,
Whose touch is 'tried' !

Few hearts now kindle at thine ashen pyre,
Whose fires have died !

But hurried fingers sweep and play,
Brief notes that speak, then die away ;
Mere echoes, lost beside the way,
Where full tones plied.

The altar of the muse is thickly spread,
Her votive shrine !
She haughty curls her lip, scarce turns her head,
Or gives no sign !

But take the ringing chords' refrain,
Wake but one tender, mellow strain,
And she may turn and smile again,
Though man repine.

The simple story of a simple heart,
If truly told,
Is sweet to her who bid the sweet sound start :
The muse grows old !

Yet though neglected, and her voice
But rarely bid thy soul rejoice,
'Truth' is the sole spring of her choice,
Not bartered, sold.

The voices of the 'Morning' seldom gain
The far 'encore' !
The links within the sleeping heart's deep chain
Are heard no more !
If scorned and tossed aside they be,
As tones that only sing of Thee,
They will return, though now they flee
The echo-shore !

ONE GATHERED LIFE.

HE dwelt within
The city's vast enfold,
Where the dull din
Speaks rushing life untold.

She lived and loved
Among the starrèd fields,
Where sweetness proved
Its double fragrance yields.

She gave her heart,
The rose-enflow'rèd chain
Of life and love,
To soothe his restive pain.

He took the gift,
And bore it far away
To where the drift
Of o'ercast shadows stay.

He mused o'er wrongs
And questions of the day ;
She warbled songs
To sing to him one day.

She, fairer still
Held life than 'twas before ;
He drank his fill,
Then sought her love no more !

He slumbered on,
Nor knew his dawn a dream ;
Her 'all' was gone,
The very sunlight's gleam.

And evening came,
And morning passed away ;
He never came,
She could but weep and pray.

He was as lost
Within a troubled sea ;
She as one toss'd
Upon life's mockery.

There came a hush,
Her gentle spirit waned ;
More in the rush,
His eye towards Fame was strained.

On, on he delved,
Absorbèd, yet serene ;
Love's life was shelved,
Its pauses filled between.

Rose pink the bloom
Of blossom on the wall,
Frail breaths that loom
Where laden, full, they fall.

Her ling'ring tread
Had trod its last ; the day
Bent its bright head,
And wept beside the way.

So far away,
Upon that summer night—
So far away,
There soared a spirit bright.

Holy the peace,
In silence 'Night' knelt by ;
Her watches cease,
She, too, must tearful fly.

And what of Him ?
He woke to mourn, and know
Life's Diadem
Embraced his dead Love's brow.

THE END.



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